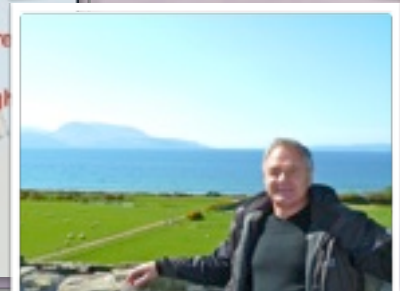
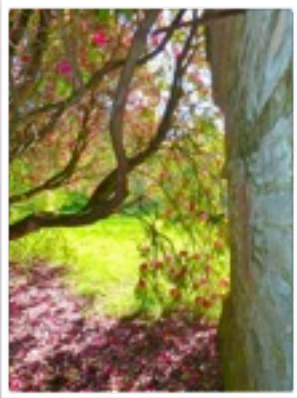


2011 - SCOTLAND

2 May 2011

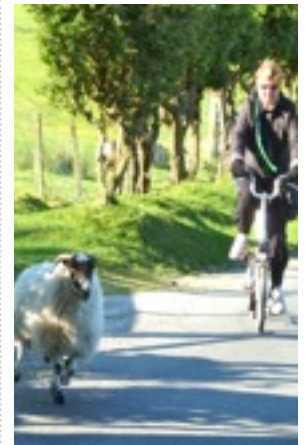
Goodbye Arran, Hello Kintyre

The western coast of Scotland has a very ragged coastline with many peninsulas and islands. We intend to see quite a few islands in the next 2 weeks.





Lochranza Castle looks small from a distance



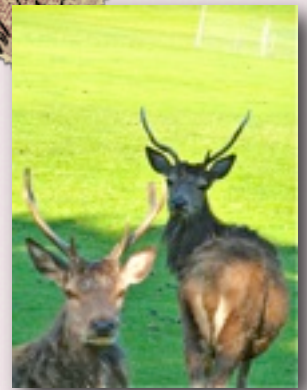
Heather herding sheep

LOCHRANZA

We woke early and before catching the ferry to Kintyre decided an early morning ride would be good for us. Mornings may be sunny here but they are really cold. Our coat zips were fully done up, our gloves were on and I had my ears covered (they have been giving me hell - bad frostbite type pain at night). Despite the biting air we love our early morning rides. Lochranza Castle beckoned and we were keen to glimpse red deer which we were told live around here. As soon as we left the van we encountered red deer - droppings. They had left calling cards when they cropped the grass around our van during the night. We had to weave carefully around lots of black poo.

The castle gatekeeper saw us peeking into the castle so he came over and let us in. We took ourselves around and read the various plaques describing the history of this 13th century embattlement. I particularly liked the "murder hole", a part jutting out over the entrance where defenders shot arrows and threw burning oil at anyone trying to break down the door.

After spending time casually roaming around the castle precincts we meandered on and came across red deer! They were sitting in a paddock literally 2 meters away from us. They have an almost disdainful air about them but their faces are very regal and their antlers are amazingly beautiful. On the way back to the caravan park we took a short cut through the golf course and came across more red deer. It was almost "look Heather there's another deer" with a comment back "yea I know, there are more over there."



Heather found this "Z" grade listed house very interesting.



Amazing scenery from the top of Skipness Castle with St Brendan's chapel below



Hilarious sign

SKIPNESS CASTLE

Most people turn left when they get off the ferry at Clanoaig on the Kintyre peninsular but we turned right and followed a tiny road that hugged a spectacular jagged rock coastline and ended in a little village called Skipness. The road beckoned us on till surprise, surprise we found ourselves looking up at yet another castle. What an amazing place this was! We had the place all to ourselves and it was the highlight of our Scottish trip so far. The beautiful weather, the endless views across the water to Arran, the sheep upon sheep in lush green paddocks had the Nowak's feeling very pleased with themselves. Life is good.

It was time to move on. We spent the rest of the day traveling along very narrow roads along the coast. We happened upon Saddell Abbey, a 12th century Cistercian monastic ruin and admired its tranquility. We were so pleased that there were few people around. This was the Scotland that we had come to see. After Campbell Town, near the southern tip of Kintyre, we turned north and drove further up the coast to be near the ferry crossing for the isle of Islay tomorrow.

