

Title:

Old Friends and Familiar Haunts

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Summary:

We hadn't seen them for several years; Heather and Sarge were the first to phone and say they were here in the UK and hoped to see us before returning home.

Keywords:

Inveraray, Loch Lomond, Helensburgh

Article Body:

We hadn't seen them for several years; Heather and Sarge were the first to phone and say they were here in the UK and hoped to see us before returning home. Then, out of the blue, Sandy phoned me to say that some friends had turned up at the shop and were waiting to see me. .... the strange thing was that I had flat-shared with Naval when he was a student; then when I sold the flat and moved away, he flatbed with Heather. So for the first time in many years, we were all in Scotland at the same time.

Despite my best efforts, we didn't manage to have a grand reunion; Heather and Sarge had made alternative arrangements for last week. However, Sandy and I met up with Naval and his family in Inveraray - where we "Chewed the Cud" and shocked one another with various tales of derring do. By the way, in case you haven't tried it, you really must visit the George Hotel in Inveraray and have a meal there. It's tremendous value for money and the food is brilliant.

We had a quick walk round the town after lunch and decided to go to the Wild Life Park. Unfortunately this business has closed and we were a bit too late to find anything else which was child-friendly in the area. So Naval invited us to have a coffee at their holiday villa at Arden. We drove back towards Helensburgh and Naval led us into the Gardeners' Cottages at Arden. It's like stepping into a secret world. The Gardeners' Cottages are all in a row; several are available for holiday lets; the owners live in one so are always on hand to give advice or sort out any problems (can't imagine there are any.)

The cottage was beautiful; two bedrooms, an immaculate bathroom and a very nice living-room. Apparently, when Naval and family arrived, there were lovely red roses in the rooms, fruit had been left, there was milk, bread, tea, coffee in

the kitchen - and the cottage was lovely and warm for them. Naval showed us round the garden - which had been an old walled garden; in September it was past its best, but still looked great. There's also a small putting green to entertain the visitors. A path leads from the cottages down to a small, private beach on the edge of Loch Lomond.

It's impossible to see the cottages from the main road, so the feeling of seclusion is fantastic - although there are other houses in the vicinity. If we didn't live just eight miles away, it would be a lovely place to have a holiday.