**Cuil House, Cairndow.**

I moved to Cuil in 1959. My father took a job as factor to Ardkinglas and Strone Estate. A dog with two masters!

We left our own hill farm in Inverness-shire and moved to a new home. The house had been “done up “for the estate manager and his family. There were three boys Hamish, Shaun and myself, Donald, and my parents Ben and Creina Coutts.

My first memories of the house were that it smelt of paint. New. It was posher than our old home, and surprise, surprise, the sitting room was upstairs.

The house was large. A big kitchen, scullery, office and spare room, downstairs. 2 Bedrooms, and a sitting room on the middle floor, and three bedrooms upstairs for us boys. Plenty of room for play.

My mother suddenly was no longer a farmer’s wife, she had time on her hands. We no longer had high tea, we had dinner, in the evening! A new meal came into existence, lunch!

The piano in the siting room was suddenly being used. The house was full of beautiful classical music.  A serenade to our new social position.

My memories of the house are plentiful.

Open windows in the summer, yellow daffodils, and the large green tree swishing in the wind.  Nigel’s land rover coming to pick me up for school, ice on the brae and not being able to get the car up to the house. Playing football with the ball running down the hill onto the road.  The slow rumble of traffic on the main road during the summer, as tourists went down the loch. The bus from Ardrishaig stopping with Prawns for our new found Dinner parties. Playing around the outhouses, cycling up to Clachan to play football. Rowing across the loch in our rowing boat, The Rev. Collecting mussels from the rocks below the house. Drinking water from the well, near the road. Hearing the HI FI on the terrace of Ardkinglas on still evenings. Cycling round the head of the loch to the Highlands and Islands Films at the hall.

It was a warm friendly family home until I was sent away to boarding school, and my real links with Cuil and Cairndow were severed. My parents separated and went their different ways. My mother to Edinburgh and my father to Perthshire. He was heard to mutter that no one could farm with weather as wet as it was in Argyll-shire!

It was a happy home for me albeit for a short time in my life. I think we were there for about six years. Whenever I come round the hill on the Glasgow road my heart still skips a beat seeing it there on the opposite hillside.

Don Coutts