Ernie and Irene McPherson

The first house I lived in was Croitachonie (above Campbells) not a lot of memories as I was a baby. The only thing I remember is crawling out the back door up into the byre.

When father went to work for Ardkinglas Estate, we moved to Upper Crotachonie.

When I lived at Upper Croitachonie (Now Croft Kennels) as a boy there was a living room cum kitchen and three bedrooms, one downstairs, two upstairs. There was an outside dry toilet (small wooden shed.) Joined to the house was the byre which had a cold tap outside the door. This is where we had to wash and get the water for the house.

About 1955 – 56 the estate built on a new kitchen and bathroom using the byre as part of the bathroom. They also built a new byre as it is today, also they put new dormer windows in the two bedrooms up stairs in place of the skylights that were there. It had a private water supply, it had coal fires in all the rooms except the living room cum kitchen which had a Raeburn in it, and this was moved into the new kitchen where it only heated it and the hot water.

In 1960 we moved to Clachan Beag. It had three bedrooms, a bathroom, living room, and small kitchen with a coal bunker in it and one cupboard. It also had an outside larder attached to the house; a garage was built with wooden sections which came from the canteen at Shira camp which the estate bought when the camp was being dismantled. At the back of the house there are three dog kennels and dog runs.

In the kitchen was a Raeburn, the living room had an open coal fire. It has private water supply.

When Irene and I got married in 1967 we lived in Upper Croitachonie. The only two changes to the house then was the bathroom walls were lined with gyprock as the dampness was coming through the plaster because the sand that was used to make the blocks was from the shore and the salt in it was drawing the dampness out of the cement. A new porch was built to the front. Our daughter Laura and son Douglas were born when we lived there.

We moved to the Bothy at Ardno in 1972. The house used to be two Bothy’s for farm workers, it was completely gutted back to the four walls and re-built. It has three bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and a separate toilet and store.

It has an oil-fired Raeburn with central heating throughout the house, it also had a private water supply.

In the living room is an open fire. It has no double glazing; it has a bay window. There are three doors in the house, two at the back and one at the front. The front hall, bathroom, small toilet, store and the two back doors were all built on at the back of the existing building.

When we lived there Douglas and Laura attended school in Strachur, also Dunoon Grammar School.

The work to restore the house was carried out by Cairndow Estate, then owned by Lord Glenkinglas. The Joiner was Willie MacPherson, helped by Nigel Callander. The masonry work was by Boleck Kobiela and John MacDonald. Electrician was Willie McCulloch of Inveraray. Willie MacPherson also did the painting.

When it was a Bothy, and used by farm workers, at night before going to bed they would have a competition to see how many fleas they could kill in their beds before climbing in!

In 1984, we had to leave Ardno as I was made redundant due to the death of my boss Lord Glenkinglas. We were very lucky to be able to buy Clachan Beag from Mr. Johnny Noble. It had not changed since I last lived there. We have been able to make a few improvements over the years (i.e. fitted double-glazing all round. The two Livingroom windows were made larger. We halved the bathroom into a shower and toilet to make the back bedroom into en-suite we also made the master bedroom en-suite by incorporating the outside larder into it.)

The kitchen we re-arranged by getting rid of the old coalbunker and cupboard also the Raeburn, we put in a new window on the gable wall and a new kitchen.

We also installed gas central heating through out the house. On the back of the house we built a new back door and patio doors.

We have also re built the Garage with block as the old one was removed before we moved there. We also added a patio area to the side and front of the house, fenced and landscaped the garden.