

8 January 2010 to 22 January 2010

On this occasion, our daughter and son-in-law with their 9 month old baby had come over from Australia and were staying with us over the festive period. I have a charming picture of Adina in a plastic wash-up bowl in front of the fire having her bath! Because the water was off, our main source of heat and hot water - the Rayburn stove - was unable to be on.

19 December 2010 to 21 January 2011

There were at least three other occasions when we had to relocate to nearby hotels for a couple of days (on two of those occasions we had guests). Scottish Water on all those occasions paid for the hotel and self-catering bills.

These together with the almost daily interruptions to our water supply from its inception in 2003 were due to the inappropriate technology for the pump house at the alternative water supply that Scottish Power had to install as a condition of getting planning consent from Argyll and Bute Council. Our views on the ill-advised hi-tech system were ignored and money was poured into this "tardis" at the head of the glen. The nature of burn water supply in highland regions is such that a much simpler system is workable.

Scottish Power also declined to accept my suggestion that they go substantially further upstream in order to get a purer supply at the outset rather than their cheaper choice of close to the main road and also downhill from a working sheep and cattle farm. The other advantage of the higher location would have meant we could have had a gravity-fed system which would have been far more appropriate.

The final insult was that the company they chose to carry out the works - McGarvie - cut corners at every possible opportunity. We still have dangerously lumpy verges because they never properly re-instated them no matter how many times we insisted on this both with McGarvie and Scottish Power.

But the most shocking discovery, which led to these two major freeze-ups of our supply, was that they had failed to lay the supply pipes to our houses at the recognised minimum depth. We still can't believe just how shallow they had laid it - 4"!! Nobody at the council seemed unduly concerned about this which, if they had, might have increased our chances of getting some kind of compensation for the debacle.

Scottish Power at this point realised that they had a mess on their hands. They brought in another contractor and the pipes were re-laid to the requisite depth of between 3 and 4 feet (below the frost line). By this time they had persuaded Scottish Water to extend its public water supply further up the glen to take in our houses. They must have had to offer a substantial amount because Scottish Water threw out my suggestion that they extend their supply at the outset when the Cruach Mhor plans were made public. They said that it was totally unprofitable for them to do so.

