

RAF STONEY CROSS **Memories of Life at Longbeech**

Recollections By David James Caplehorn

First Home: "The Camp" at Stoney Cross

Having been born in Lyndhurst, Hants in 1947 my first home with Mum, Dad and Trish, was an ex-RAF Nissan Hut, located at Stoney Cross Airfield, near Cadnam in the New Forest, about 5 miles from Southampton. The ex-Airforce living quarters at The Camp, were located at Long Beech, adjacent to the Aerodrome.

Mum and Dad and other families set up home in these huts or "The Camp" as it was known, in 1947 after dad came out of the Royal Navy, and after it was vacated by the RAF/USAF at the end of WW2. They were squatters really. Until they moved to the camp, mum and dad lived at Winsor with my Grandparents. Dads mate Basil Lamb told him that people were moving into the Camp, so Mum and Dad packed their belongings and moved in, as well. Trish my older sister vaguely remembers living there.

Dad said when the Council found out that a community was occupying the Huts; they took steps to make them habitable, turning the huts into basic living accommodation. But he said it was always cold and damp during the winter months.

The huts were made of corrugated iron sheets, were Arch shape with block-built ends and a metal door, which had concrete steps leading up to it. Each hut was divided into two homes. In those days Stoney Cross was located deep in the New Forest and the only transport being the bus; it was a difficult place to get to. Dad told me that the men would get together and saw up fallen trees from the forest floor to fuel their stoves.

We moved from Stoney Cross when I was about 4 years old, after mum and dad were given a Council House at No.7 Teddar Way. In Totton. I do not actually remember living at "The Camp" but I do remember visiting mum's sister, Auntie Freda and Uncle Malcolm Thorpe, who also lived there before moving to the Prefabs at Howndown, Totton. The trip on the bus from Totton to Stoney Cross those days was a journey, ending with a long walk from the bus stop located on the main Southampton, Bournemouth Road, down to the Camp. It was normally pitch black after dark.

Robert Morris's family and Brother-in-Law Terry's mum and dad, Mr. and Mrs. Saunders also lived out there, also Jim Redmond's family. There were also Basil Lambs Family and probably a good few of the families who lived round Teddar Way area, in Totton, were one-time residents at the camp. As the Council moved people from Stoney Cross to Teddar way and the Pre-Fabs at Howndown. The last families moved out of the camp in 1954.

Those days, dad felt that there was a bit of a stigma attached to "Camp" families, so it was not mentioned much that we lived out there. However, Tuesday 3rd. January 2011

today I am proud of the fact we lived at The Camp, it was our first Family home, and it makes us a unique group of people.

Terry's mum Mrs. Saunders who herself had been in the Wartime R.A.F. was a widow, living in Hut 270 with son Robert, her surname was Latham then. Her husband and Bob's father was an RAF bomber Crew member and had been killed on a mission over France. She married Mr. Saunders after meeting him while he was employed by the Council refurbishing the huts.

Photos Showing the Camp and Nissan Huts at Stoney Cross.



Tuesday

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