

RAF STONEY CROSS
Memories of Life at Longbeech

Mr. Bob Blake

My wife and I were married in 1948 and had our first baby that year. We were 'housed' in Stoney Cross in 1949, we went there because one was strongly considered for a council house if one did and in fact my wife and I were allocated a house in 1950. During this time, I was serving in the Royal Navy. Our hut had a WC, a long Kitchen/Dining Room/Sitting Room and two other rooms for bedrooms. Bathing was a stand-up job at the kitchen sink, but we were very happy there and had some fond memories of the place. Bicycles were the only means of transport for most folk and tradesmen used to call on a regular basis although I seem to recall there was a shop there, but I cannot remember where.

The common room I will call it had a kitchen range, which was the only form of heating, but there was electric light. The chimney from the kitchen range was quite small, about four" in diameter. This needed regular cleaning, as I had no ladder at the time my method of doing this was to climb an adjacent tree, move along a branch and reach the chimney. My wife would then pass me up a flue brush tied to a long stick, which I would push down the flue. All the soot would go down into the range below which was suitably covered to restrain the mess. The stove was then cleaned of all this soot and ash and the fire then burned very well.

On one occasion I had put all the soot and ash into a cardboard box, which was placed on a low stool. My son was now crawling and reached up and grabbed the back of the box. The result of course was a little lad who was covered completely with the contents of the box, it wasn't of course funny at the time but later we recalled how as he cried his tears washed down his cheeks and he had to be cleaned up in the kitchen sink. Poor lad!

On another occasion my wife had left the door open, and he crawled outside. She wondered where he had found the door open, she ran outside only to find he had crawled under the milkman's truck. Her legs went to jelly as the milkman drove off, but he was not hurt. The milkman got a good telling off the next time he called I can tell you, but the key was always turned in the lock after that.

Sweet memories to be sure. I should like to come to a reunion if there is one, but I doubt if I should recognise anyone. Truth to tell I am not really sure of the site of the hut if the tree has been cut down.