

RAF STONEY CROSS
Memories of Life at Longbeech

Mrs. M. Lewis

My husband, small boy and self-moved into 331 Longbeech on 19th March 1950 and left in August '53.

The hut was divided into three, with running water and electricity, we had a kitchen range which my husband and myself took great pride in. We were always polishing with black lead and emery paper and whitened the hearth around it. In one corner was a large sink and coalbunker in the other.

It was very cold in winter and very hot in summer. We used to boil up our washing in a galvanised bath on a primus stove in the garden, weather permitting. The flush toilet was in a block about two huts away. Most afternoons I took my son into the enclosure to gather lighting wood for the stove.

We had a shop, Church, and Doctors surgery also a bus service to Lyndhurst from the top of the camp, coal, milk, bread and green groceries were delivered, and although coal was in short supply we never went without. Our rent for this was 7/6d (37¹/₂p) per week.

My son started school at Bramshaw when he was five. I used to put him on the bus and meet him in late afternoon. If I thought he was poorly he did not go as it was a long day for a small child and he managed to get measles and whooping cough soon after starting. The previous tenant of our hut had put a fence round front and back, so we were able to cultivate a piece of ground and grew some very good vegetables.

When we first moved in my husband painted pictures round our hut, owls, ducks, chickens, and rabbits to amuse our son. While living there he built a towing caravan in the spare room during winter, taking it outside and bolting it together at Easter time. Quite a few of our neighbours were interested in what he was doing. At that time, he was working for the Ministry of Defence in the big hangar on the plain.

You mention Fairfield Garage in your letter. My husband worked there for a short while, he was a first class, army-trained mechanic, driving and working on tanks during the war.

Most of the men folk at Stoney Cross were ex-forces waiting for homes and there was not a lot of money about at that time.

I made many friends at Stoney Cross, sadly most are no longer with us and that goes for my husband also.