

Trout Pit - Report for Mistley Annual Parishioners Meeting

11/03/22

Fish holding tank a.k.a. Trout Pit.

In the 18th century the MP and owner of the now demolished Mistley Hall spent much of his considerable wealth on our village but I will not dwell any more as details of his life are detailed in my Father's book 'Mistley in the Days of the Rigbys'

At the back of Furze Hill are large area of fields and woodland formerly known as the Rigby Estate and later the Norman Estate - most of which is now owned by farmer William McMillan of Dove House Farm.

In the bottom of the valley is a piece of water known as the Gamekeepers Pond, created by Rigby and called Gull Pond. The pond is fed by a stream at the eastern end and the outlet at the western end consisted of an attractive brick sluice - sadly removed recently by an angling club together with water lilies and bull rushes.

The sluice allowed water to drain into a brick-built structure about 40' x 20' which was used to store fish, mainly trout which Rigby and his influential friends caught in the pond. These were later taken out and eaten at the many banquets which Rigby hosted at the Hall.

Like the huts on Furze Hill the tank had become buried in vegetation but with Mr. McMillan's permission we removed it all and repaired some of the brickwork.

It doesn't contain water anymore but can easily be seen from the nearby public footpath despite being about 15' below the level of the pond.

We are keeping this maintained in the same way as we did with the huts despite attempts by the angling club to make access rather difficult.