

WW2 Army hut bases - Report for Mistley Annual Parishioners Meeting

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In WW2 Furze Hill became an Army base containing troops of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry and possibly the Royal Artillery.

The base consisted of Anti-Aircraft batteries and searchlights and about 20 wooden huts were built to house the personnel and their equipment.

A number of them were situated where the Village Hall and car park now are when war ended a number of young families moved into them until new houses were built in the 1950s. Conditions in these huts were dreadful with no running water or washing facilities and the only source of heat was a single tortoise stove which also had to be used for cooking.

On the other side of the field in the now wooded area were more huts of a different design with partly brick sides which were demolished at the same time.

The footings and parts of the brickwork still remain and two years ago Bob and Richard Horlock, mindful of the planned thinning out of the wood, set about removing the brambles and vegetation which had covered them over the years. They were joined by Keith Garwood and then David Smith who had lived in one of the huts as a child, and Trevor Durrant.

Work continued throughout the summer months and created a lot of interest from walkers and dog owners - many having no idea that the huts existed and were grateful to receive a history lesson.

By the end of the summer all of the remains had been uncovered and we're now in the process of maintaining them by clearing them of weeds and fallen branches. Trees had grown up through a number of the bases and these have been removed in the course of the recent thinning out of the wood.

K Garwood.