

SURVEY OF SHEEPWASH SITES IN THE COTSWOLDS AREA OF NATURAL BEAUTY

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The Cotswold Sheepwashes Project was set up by the Cotswolds Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, and funded through the Local Heritage Initiative in 2001-2002 with the purpose of collecting information about sheep washing sites (variously known in the past as 'washes', or 'washpools'). Sheep washing has long been a traditional rural practice which had several beneficial effects, such as making the shearers' job a lot more pleasant, and also making the resulting wool a better quality product, for which a higher price might be expected. The dates of sheepwashes have yet to be established in most instances. However, sheep washing is documented in place-name evidence from at least the 8th century, but this would have been in a convenient part of a stream rather than using a purpose-made structure. The sheepwashes were usually constructed from dressed stone, though later examples/repairs usually incorporate brick as well. As an example of size the sheepwashes of a circular design are usually around 5m in diameter and 1.7m deep. Sheepwashes were still being constructed into the 19th century.

During the initial desk-based survey over 800 maps were consulted dating from the 18th century to the early 20th century and covering an area of about 800 square miles. By the completion of this stage of the project a total of 132 'sheepwash' sites had been identified. The term 'sheepwash' has, however, continued to be used after traditional washing had ceased, and was subsequently applied to dips, which were used for an entirely different purpose, and so further work was required before traditional-style sheepwashes could be distinguished.

Local groups subsequently carried out a rapid written and photographic record of each 'sheepwash' site. After further analysis it was possible to finally identify 69 of the sites as sheepwashes in the more traditional sense. The field survey also confirmed that traditional sheepwashes were present in Bath and North-East Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire, as well as in Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, where they had previously been recorded. The majority of the sheepwash sites were, however, located in Gloucestershire. Initial spatial analysis suggests that several clusters of these sheepwashes can be identified in this county, for instance around Tetbury and Guiting Power, and in some cases in particular river valleys, such as, for instance, of the Rivers Coln and Leach. Table 1 is a list of traditional sheepwash sites in the Cotswold AONB.

Please note that only a few of these sites have public access. Examples of those that can be visited include: Aldsworth (site ref no 60), Ascott under Wychwood, Cutsdean (site ref no 128), and Farmington (site ref no 101).

The project offered many local history and archaeology groups the opportunity to join in the survey work. It was also important to acknowledge the support of the many farmers and landowners who granted access to the sites in the survey, and so, in common with the other participants in the survey, they were also provided with feed-back about the survey results as one of the project outcomes. Copies of the final report have been placed with county record offices and the county sites and monuments records within the Cotswold AONB.

1 PARISH	Sheepwash Survey reference no	Grid Reference Easting**	Grid reference Northing**	Shape	Condition
Alderley	83	37841	19059	Rectangular	ruined
Alderley	82	37839	19073	not known	not known
Aldsworth	60	41333	21050	Rectangular	intact
Ascott under Wychwood	142	42978	21822	Square	intact
Ashley	80	39315	19495	Oval	intact
Ashton sub Edge	134	41450	24230	Mixed	ruined
Avening	71	38766	19790	Rectangular	derelict
Badminton	86	38020	18210	not known	demolished
Bathford	121	37845	16535	Circular	ruined
Baunton	129	40200	20497	Rectangular	intact
Bisley with Nether Lypiatt	104	39292	20710	not known	not known
Box	100	38370	17100	Circular	intact
Box	101	38320	16790	Other	demolished
Brailes	90	43295	23725	Other	ruined
Brickhampton	144	39770	24375	Other	demolished
Brimpsfield	113	39435	21005	Rectangular	intact
Bruern	50	42330	21725	Rectangular	derelict
Chedworth	141	40817	21294	Circular	derelict
Cherington	68	39223	19978	Rectangular	intact
Cold Aston	34	41232	21929	Circular	intact
Colerne	120	38230	17432	Other	demolished
Coln St Dennis	62	40918	20880	Other	intact
Coln St Dennis	61	40868	21033	Other	derelict
Compton Abdale	40	40510	21663	not known	ruined
Cutsdean	128	40870	23026	Other	intact
Duntisbourne Abbots	58	39808	20750	Rectangular	intact
Farmington	131	41390	21580	Oval	intact
Frocester	108	37772	20270	Circular	demolished
Gotherington	10	39725	22930	Rectangular	demolished
Guiting Power	26	40990	22450	Rectangular	derelict
Hampnett	46	40995	21540	Circular	intact
Hawling	17	40738	22480	Other	demolished
Hazleton	32	40976	21885	Rectangular	intact
Hazleton	43	40845	21795	Rectangular	derelict
Horsley	115	38486	19612	Circular	derelict
Horsley	70	38420	19820	Square	intact
Kingham	36	42587	22339	Rectangular	derelict
Longborough	15	41630	22880	not known	demolished
Marshfield	87	37707	17480	Rectangular	derelict
Milton under Wychwood	96	42595	21698	Oval	intact
North Nibley	114	37558	19615	not known	not known
Notgrove	31	41125	21960	Rectangular	derelict
Over Norton	93	43030	22800	Other	derelict
Prescott	9	39830	22905	oval	intact
Prestbury	112	39875	22425	Oval	intact
Sezincote	14	41498	23060	not known	demolished
Sherston	85	38399	18615	not known	demolished
Sherston	84	38540	18879	rectangular	Intact
Shipton	25	40475	21913	circular	intact
Southam	130	39960	22640	circular	intact
Standish	52	38125	20810	circular	intact
Stanton	3	40675	23456	circular	demolished

1 PARISH	Sheepwash Survey reference no	Grid Reference Easting**	Grid reference Northing**	Shape	Condition
Stanway	8	40425	23072	circular	intact
Sudeley	22	40348	22420	circular	intact
Sutton under Brailes	147	43020	23719	mixed	derelict
Temple Guiting	16	40980	22675	rectangular	ruined
Temple Guiting	132	41190	22930	other	derelict
Temple Guiting	136	40770	22720	other	ruined
Toddington	5	40330	23380	not known	demolished
Toddington	2	40420	23518	circular	derelict
Uley	127	37858	19795	other	ruined
Upper Slaughter	140	41560	22330	other	demolished
Warmington	148	44125	24770	mixed	derelict
Whittington	133	40270	22028	rectangular	intact
Winstone	56	39813	20927	rectangular	intact
Winstone	111	39435	21005	rectangular	intact
Withington	39	40230	21601	circular	demolished
Woodmancote	11	39790	22732	not known	demolished
Yanworth	48	40820	21295	other	intact

**Grid references are all fully numeric (ie the initial digits of both the easting and the northing together denote the relevant 100km grid square). Please note that only a few of these sites have public access. *Derek Hurst is with the Worcestershire County Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (University College Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester WR2 6AJ*