

LASSCO

www.lassco.co.uk

THREE PIGEONS

LASSCO Three Pigeons
Milton Common,
Oxfordshire OX9 2JN
+44 (0)1844 277188
3pigeons@lassco.co.uk

BRUNSWICK HOUSE

30 Wandsworth Road,
London SW8 2LG
+44 (0) 20 7394 2100
brunswick@lassco.co.uk



A SET OF ELEVEN ENGLISH COTSWOLD-STONE STADDLES,

Bampton, Oxfordshire, probably 18th Century,

the circular domed top raised on a tapered square section base, old lichen and moss,

DIMENSIONS: 78cm (30^{3⁄4}") High, 65cm (25^{1⁄2}") Wide, 65cm (25^{1⁄2}") in Diameter, The set fairly uniform range: 71-78cm h, 59-65cm diameter the tops, 35-44cm wide the square bases

STOCK CODE: 45827



HISTORY

It is great to have found a set of sizable staddle stones such as these. They were buried deep and dotted about in a garden to the back of an old cottage in the picturesque High Street in Bampton. They are known to have been there for decades and it's assumed that they probably hadn't moved far from a granary long demolished. Annoyingly someone had inadvisedly secured the tops of the "mushrooms' upside-down but we have managed to release them without mis-hap (signs of cement and pins evident on some). Condition is generally good for old staddles although two have a side off the top. A number of them have the remains of tar across one side – evidence that they were indeed under a timber building a long time ago.

Staddle stones – an explanation.



Staddle stones were originally used as the supporting posts for granaries, hayricks, game ladders, etc. The staddles lifted the granaries above the ground thereby protecting the stored grain both from vermin and water ingress from damp foundations. The word “staddle” is derived from the Middle English word “stadle” or “stathel”, meaning a foundation, support or trunk of a tree. Old staddle stones can be mainly spotted in England and Scotland, but versions of them are found in France and Northern Spain.

The staddle stones usually had a separate head and base which gave the whole structure a 'mushroom' form. Different areas adopted different designs – so vernacular styles can be identified – square tops, fluted designs and slate tops – the shapes can vary from cylindrical to tapered, and in plan – rectangular to near triangular. The material used for these heavy stones would obviously be whatever was locally available. The tops are usually flat to support the beams of the granary base.

Iron ones were made but are unusual; The Museum of Scottish Country Life near East Kilbride has two 'Stathels', made in Edinburgh of cast iron and there are similar sets on display at The Chiltern Open Air Museum. The structure is basically a cast iron version of a set of staddle stones with a connecting wooden framework.

Granaries were often constructed with wooden weather-boards but if grain was stored loose then the sides were filled in with brick nogging and light lath-and-plaster at the wall tops. Wooden steps up to the buildings were detachable and stored by hanging them up on the side of the structure. If stone or brick steps were built then the top step was omitted.

Most granaries were used for the storage of two or three separate crops, having a capacity of 500 to 2500 bushels. The arrangement of the stones to support the structure and its weight when in use, required nine, twelve or sixteen staddles. The production of staddles was therefore a fairly significant local industry. Small granaries could make do with five, one being in the middle. The Upper Heyford granary in Oxfordshire uses thirty-six staddles.

Other uses: Bee hives were often set on top of staddle stones to keep out predators and provide dry and airy conditions. Small staddle stones were used to support roofed box-shaped larders which were used on the larger estates for storage of game, such as pheasant, brought back by shooting parties.