

Secret Cottage, the personal guided tour that love talking about Staddle Stones. Our tourists are obsessed by them!

Our Cotswolds Day Trips take us on some amazing discoveries! Today we want to know if you've ever seen these mushroom shaped stones on your travels?

They're called Staddle stones and were originally used as a kind of 'stilt' as supporting bases for granaries, beehives, hayricks and game larders.

The idea is that they lift buildings such as granaries above ground level to protect stored grain from vermin and raise the building high enough off the ground to avoid water damage.

Staddles were originally made from wood, but it was discovered that stone is longer lasting and provided a better support for a particularly heavy structures. Staddle stones are, in fact, made up of two parts – the cylindrical base and the domed head – when assembled they give the mushroom shape. The domed head makes it almost impossible for rodents to climb up and over to the grain stores above. However, there are variations in the style and materials across the country – different areas in Britain have slightly different designs. The bases might vary from cylindrical to tapered to almost triangular and some tops are flat or square rather than domed. The type of stone available changes the colour throughout the country so you might get red sandstone or granite, depending on where you are in Britain.

In West Sussex there is a particularly impressive granary

built in 1731 which uses straddle stones. In Tavistock you can see substantial barns supported by staddle stones. In Scotland, at the museum of Scottish Country Life, you'll find rare straddle 'stones' made from cast iron.

Nowadays, we don't normally need straddle stones to keep grain stores safe, but we still love them for their history and quirky charm. Salvage yards are full of them and you can even buy new ones made from moulded concrete or wood that has been chainsawed into the iconic mushroom shape. People use them for garden landscaping, conversation-worthy seating or ornaments!