

A New Survey of the Stone Stiles of Cam in November 2020 to April 2021

By John Fowles

Introduction

Cam Parish has a number of stone stiles, most of which have been supplemented by wooden stiles. The stone used appears to be the same for all and is probably limestone from the former quarry at Woodfield. The purpose of the stiles is unknown and an investigation of the Berkeley Estate records produced no information on them. One theory is that the area was widely used for sheep to provide wool for the local industry so it is possible that the stone stiles were used to prevent sheep getting through stiles on public footpaths.

Part of a Local Heritage Initiative Lottery Fund Grant covered the surveying and maintenance of Cam's historic stone stiles in 2007. The locations of the stone stiles had already been identified and they had been placed on a map of the Cam area. Some of the stone stiles have been included in a stone stiles walk to encourage the public to view them and a Stone Stiles Walk leaflet was published. A photographic record of the stone stiles walk was created and presented to the public as a 'virtual' Stone Stiles Walk, benefiting those unable to walk on rough terrain. The 2007 report was hosted on the internet by Stroud Valleys Project but appears to have been discontinued.

This new survey was carried out in November 2020 to April 2021 to update and supplement the previous survey. In the meantime an additional stone stile has been found in the Jubilee Field (a Parish Council owned leisure area) and that has been included in this new survey as SS16. Some of the stile numbers have been changed slightly as described in the text.

Survey Results

All of Cam's recorded stone stiles were visited and photographed between early November 2020 and early April 2021. The information gathered is presented in this section. All map references are for OS Explorer Map 167, 1:25,000. In addition a GPS reading has been made and that is reported as well. Numbered Stone Stile Markers have been placed close to all but one of the stiles (SS7 – now demolished) to ease identification and, hopefully, discourage removal. Another possible stone stile, SS3B, has been mainly removed since 2007.

Stone Stiles 1A, B, C This is a group of three stiles in the Upthorpe/Cam Green area of the parish. They were originally identified in 2007 as SS1, SS1A and SS1B but these have been changed to SS1A, SS1B and SS1C respectively in this survey. SS1A is at map reference 760000 (Longitude 51.6985, Latitude -2.3500); and SS1B (Longitude 51.6990, Latitude -2.3488) and SS1C (Longitude 51.6912, Latitude -2.3488) are close together at 760001.

SS1A is on CCA63 and is in good condition. It is leaning slightly and the adjacent wooden stile has been removed since 2007. It could be raised to the vertical but it is probably not worth the effort. There is a tree leaning across it and the nearby additional wooden stile (see picture) does not have a step making it difficult to cross (it has a wire mesh within the frame). The 1A marker has been attached to the adjacent post.



SS1A

SS1B is on CCA60 and is very low. It is probably a complete stile leaning forward and sunk deep into the ground. The accompanying wooden stile has rotted and has been removed to the hedge nearby since 2007. SS1B is worn where walkers used to step onto it after crossing the wooden stile but they can now walk round it. With considerable effort it could be excavated and raised to the vertical. SS1B marker has been attached to a new post close to the hedge.



SS1B

SS1C is also on CCA60 by a wooden stile. It is immediately to the west of SS1B. It is deep within the hedge and covered in moss and grass making it difficult to spot. There is also an old iron gate leaning on one side of it. The removal of the grass and other plants to make it more visible would be beneficial. A lot of the ivy has been removed from one side. The SS1C marker has been placed on the wooden post to the left of the picture.



SS1C

Stone Stile 2 SS2 is a single stile to the west of Field Lane at the start of paths CCA13 and CCA14 - map reference 738004 (Longitude 51.7016, Latitude -2.3803) near to the mobile phone mast. CCA14 has been diverted by the creation of a large fence and fast-growing, coniferous hedge. The stone is broken but the larger section is upright and supported and protected by the wooden stile. No work is required on this stile. SS2 marker has been attached to the wooden stile.



SS2



SS2

Stone Stile 3A SS3A was referred to as SS3 in the 2007 report. It is a single stile beyond an excavated area on CCA13, the same path as SS2. It is at map reference 734004 (Longitude 51.7018, Latitude -2.3833). It is leaning slightly away from the wooden stile and is supported by a small earth bank covered in vegetation which grows across the stone in summer. The stone could be raised to the vertical and supported on the earth bank side by a protective wooden frame. The dense vegetation could be removed from the earth bank making it more visible. SS3A marker has been attached to the wooden stile.



SS3A



SS3A

Stone Stile 3B This was stile 3A in the 2007 report. It is at map reference 734003 (Longitude 51.7011, Latitude -2.3860) next to a spring that fed a trough in 2007. The area is in the same field as SS3A above but in another hedge about a hundred metres to the south and on the route of footpath, CCA107. The bulk of the stone and the trough have been removed since 2007 and a pile of stones at the bottom of the field, next to a gate, is probably it. It was a few metres downhill from a wooden stile but that stile has been replaced by a fence and barbed wire. The area is virtually impassable anyway because the spring that fed the trough now creates a large marshy area and so walkers have had to divert the path to use the gate mentioned above.



SS3B

Stone Stile 4 SS4 is a single stile on CCA13/CCA107 at map reference 733004 (Longitude 51.7016, Latitude -2.3880). It is leaning away from the wooden stile and appears to have a piece broken off and lying nearby. The stone could be raised to vertical, incorporating the broken bit if appropriate, and joined into the wooden stile. This would require considerable effort and the rebuilding of the wooden stile which is in good condition. Marker SS4 has been attached to the wooden stile.



SS4

Stone Stile 5 SS5 is at the top of a bank on the east side of Field Lane on CCA20 at map reference 737007 (Longitude 51.7044, Latitude -2.3209). It is upright, incorporated into a wooden stile and supported on each side by concrete steps. SS5 marker has been attached to the wooden stile.





SS5

Stone Stile 6 SS6 is on CCA40, at map reference 740004 (Longitude 51.7023 , Latitude - 2.3771). It is broken in two and in 2007 one half was close to horizontal and the other half close to vertical. The horizontal part is now vertical close to its original position. The stone has no supporting frame and the boundary fence/hedge has been removed. SS6 marker has been attached to the fence post.



SS6

Stone Stile 7 This stile on CCA43 at map reference 742004 (Longitude 51.7019 , Latitude -2.3748) was destroyed in 2001 by workmen installing a kissing gate. A small remnant remains in the fence (bottom right of picture).



Site of SS7

Stone Stile 8 SS8 is near to the Jubilee Field at Draycott on CCA22 at map reference 745010 (Longitude 51.7074 , Latitude -2.3697). It now vertical within a wooden stile and appears to be complete. It has been marked as SS8 on the wooden stile.



Stone Stile 9 SS9 is a fragment of what could have been a stone stile lying next to a wooden stile on CCA24 at map reference 744015 (Longitude 51.7116 , Latitude -2.3707). It is

not obvious how it relates to an original stone stile. It is currently used as a stepping stone but could be secured within the existing wooden stile to protect it. It has been marked as SS9. This stile was heavily covered with brambles and hawthorn and that has now been removed to make the stile usable again. The SS9 marker has been attached to the wooden stile.



SS9

Stone Stile 10 SS10 is close to SS9 on CCA24 at map reference 745015 (Longitude 51.7126 , Latitude -2.3693). It stands in the hedgerow next to a wooden stile and is close to vertical. The hedge could be cut back on one side to make it more visible. The SS10 marker has been attached to the wooden stile.



SS10



SS10

Stone Stile 11 SS11 is in the same footpath as SS9 and SS10, CCA24, at map reference 746016 (Longitude 51.7130 , Latitude -2.3683). It stands vertically and requires no work doing to it. A new stile and bridge has been built next to it, bypassing the original stile and bridge over the ditch. It has been marked SS11 on the new stile.



SS11



SS11

Stone Stile 12 SS12 is just around the corner from SS11, but on CCA25, and at the same map reference 746016 (Longitude 51.7131 , Latitude -2.3682). It looks damaged but is vertical and well supported in a wooden stile. No work is required on it. It has been marked SS12.



SS12

Stone Stile 13 SS13 is the junction of Blind Lane, Elstub Lane and a footpath to Woodfield, CCA50. It is on the edge of the Bovis Estate at map reference 745002 (Longitude 51.7131 , Latitude -2.3682). The stone is in two halves and they have been positioned on either side of the start of the footpath to Woodfield. I am told that it was originally at a field boundary higher up this footpath (nearer to Woodfield). Given that the footpath has been converted to a 'snicket' or urban alley it is not clear how the stile could be replaced. It is probably best left where it is. It has been marked as SS13 on a new post.



SS13

Stone Stile 14 SS14 is on the path between SS4 and SS5, CCA12. It stands next to a wooden stile at map reference 735005 (Longitude 51.7031, Latitude -2.3849). It is close to vertical and the brambles have been removed. It is now used by walkers instead of the wooden stile. SS14 marker has been attached to the wooden stile.



SS14



Stone Stile 15 This is a recently discovered stile in Woodend Lane. It is not on an existing footpath but is fairly close to the start of CCA19 and CCA27 and is shown on the 1953 definitive map as the original starting point of these paths. It is at map reference 744007 (Longitude 51.7046 , Latitude -2.3717). It is hidden deep in the hedge and covered with ivy but appears to be in good condition. It has been marked as SS15 on a new post near the roadside.



SS15

Stone Stile 16 This is a recently discovered stile in the Jubilee Field. It is not on an existing footpath but is in an overgrown hedge on a line between an existing stile and the corner of the Jubilee Field nearest to the old Coaley Junction station. It is possible that this path originally went to Coaley Junction but was diverted when part of the field became a local refuse tip. The stone is broken in two but both halves are vertical and look to be in the correct position. It is possible that it was originally built using two stones. The stone is located at 742009 (Latitude 51.7088, Longitude -2.3737). It is next to the remains of a fallen tree and was originally totally covered in ivy. It has been cleared and marked as SS16.





SS16