

Project Cleansweep

Project Cleansweep was set up in 2007 to provide assurance that residual contamination caused as a result of the manufacture, storage, handling or disposal of chemical warfare agents (principally mustard agent) on sites in the United Kingdom does not pose a risk to human health or the environment. It is known that clearance would have been carried out on sites in the UK associated with chemical warfare agents when they were closed (often many decades ago) but we do not have scientific evidence that all harmful traces of the agents were removed or disposed of.

Project Cleansweep initially carried out a desk study of a large number of sites across the UK where there was evidence of some prior connection to chemical warfare agents. This list was eventually reduced to 14 sites (mainly in private ownership) which merited investigation to quantify the risks and any necessary management measures required. These sites are listed in the table below.

This work has now been completed and investigations suggest no indication of significant risk to public health or environment associated with the past storage or disposal of chemical weapon agents in the UK. On the basis of investigations, the MOD also believes that the sites are suitable for their current use, provided any management systems, restrictions or procedures remain in place.

A comprehensive Project Completion report will be published later in the year when a copy will be placed in the Library of the House of Commons as well as being sent to MPs in whose constituencies these sites are located, local authorities and environment agencies.

Site Name	Reason why site was identified for investigation
Aberfoyle, South Lanarkshire GR: 263900, 704500	US Army chemical weapons store No.25 Aberfoyle, in Scotland. Smoke generators were disposed of by burning at a location near Torrie Forest, approximately 3km south of Callander.
Bowes Moor, Durham GR: 398065, 514440	Bowes Moor, Maintenance Unit No.81, is situated near Barnard Castle in County Durham. The site stored weapons charged with mustard, phosgene and lewisite on an area of 564 acres of moorland. In total 17,000 tonnes of chemical agent was stored. (Land part-owned by MOD)
Escrick, North Yorkshire GR: 463500, 440000	Escrick Field Depot was operated by No. 80 Maintenance Unit and linked to the Forward Filling Depot at West Cottingwith. Part of the site was used for storage of mustard filled munitions.
Harpur Hill, Derbyshire GR: 405800, 370500	Harpur Hill (Maintenance Unit No.28), located 6 miles south east of Buxton in Derbyshire, was a chemical weapons (phosgene and mustard) storage site. Storage was on 104 acres of moorland within a limestone catchment area.
Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire GR: 235500, 651500	A chemical agent bomb filling plant, situated about 10 miles out of Kilmarnock and covering approximately 20 acres. The site comprised of many small one-story buildings.

Little Heath, Suffolk GR: 585100, 278000	Little Heath (Maintenance Unit No. 94), near Thetford Forest, was a Forward Filling Depot comprising three 500 ton underground mustard storage pots. Decanting and burning of munitions also took place.
Lords Bridge, Cambridgeshire GR: 539100, 253500	Lords Bridge (Maintenance Unit No.95), located 5 miles south west of Cambridge, was a Forward Filling Depot comprising two 250 ton mustard storage pots and held stocks of chemical weapons.
Norton Disney, Lincolnshire GR: 486100, 364500	Norton Disney (Maintenance Unit No.93 and also known as Swinderby) was a Forward Filling Depot. The site included two 250 ton underground mustard storage pots and facilities for filling weapons.
Riseley, Bedfordshire GR: 504100, 264800	Riseley, also known as Melchbourne Park and situated 9.5 miles north of Bedford, was a Forward Filling Depot. The site included three 500 ton underground mustard storage pots and facilities for filling weapons. Areas historically used for disposal of mustard are fenced. (Land part owned by MOD)
Southburn, Yorkshire GR: 499500, 453600	Southburn (Maintenance Unit No.91) was a CW storage site and a sub-site of a WWII Forward Filling Depot. Records indicate that the burning of 65lb LC bombs also took place.
Spalford Warren, Nottinghamshire GR: 483300, 368100	Spalford Warren (Maintenance Unit No.93), a satellite of Norton Disney, stored mustard and phosgene filled weapons. Mustard stored at Norton Disney was disposed of by burning at Spalford Warren. Areas historically used for disposal of mustard are fenced. The site has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its importance as a grass-heath habitat.
Valley, Flintshire GR: 320755, 366475	The Valley Site (also known as Rhydmywyn, near Mold in Flintshire) was a large scale chemical agent manufacture, charging and storage site.
West Cottingwith, North Yorkshire GR: 467628, 442902	West Cottingwith was part of No 80. Maintenance Unit. West Cottingwith was a Forward Filling Depot comprising two 250 ton underground mustard storage pots. In 1991 the pots were dug out and the site levelled.
Worksop, Nottinghamshire GR: 462500, 375500	US Army Storage Depot Worksop held stocks of mustard and phosgene at Clumber Park. The site was developed to hold 40,000 tonnes of mixed ammunition, including chemical weapons. The site was re-named the Central Ammunition Depot (CAD) Warsop in 1952.