

## Stoney Littleton Long Barrow, Somerset



View into a side chamber, showing bronze reinforcement bars fitted at vulnerable points.

This was a particularly rewarding project in that it brought together interests in archaeology and conservation science. Being able to return the barrow to a state where the public could again enter it was very satisfying, particularly as the barrow is on a hill no more than 2 miles from where I live.

This barrow is a wonderfully preserved example of a Cotswold-Severn Long Barrow, typical of Neolithic monuments in this part of south west England. It is built of local limestone. Access to the back of the 16 metre long 7 chambered gallery is now possible, thanks to recent intervention.

English Heritage are responsible for the monument and commissioned the restoration of public access to the chambered gallery. I was responsible for managing the project when working for Cliveden Conservation Workshop Ltd. Geophysical survey and photogrammetric recording was followed by a systematic dismantling by the archaeologists. The position of each stone was recorded before it was set aside for re-use.

The gallery of the barrow has been closed due to two major collapses having made the structure unsafe to enter. The cause of these collapses were found towards the end of the excavation—a number of large stones had fractured leading to a loss of structural stability.

After discussion with a structural engineer from English Heritage we chose to replace these stones with new and to reinforce the vulnerable areas with bronze bars. Bronze was chosen over stainless steel as it was equally stable and less visually intrusive than stainless steel.

Failed stones were replaced before the monument was rebuilt, stone by stone, by the conservators before the monument was profiled back to its original shape with new soil and an ecologically appropriate turf.