



## THE HOAR STONE AT ENSTONE.

The Hoar Stone at Enstone is an example of a Neolithic single burial chamber of a long barrow. It is part of what is known as the Cotswold - Severn group of tombs which are generally dated between 3,700 and 3,100 BC. There remain three standing stones, the largest of which is about nine feet high and is known as the "Old Soldier". However, an article in The Gentlemen's Magazine of 1824 suggests that there was a fourth stone together with a small mound. The displaced capstone now lies almost buried to the north side. It is possible that there would have been a portico but nothing of this is now visible.

Originally, long barrows contained a burial chamber with one or more compartments built of massive rock slabs covered by a mound of earth. In most cases, the mound has disappeared exposing the interior megaliths in varying degrees of disarray as seen in the Enstone Hoar Stone and also the Whispering Knights at Rollright. It is typical of the huge monuments which were built by the Neolithic people who prepared long barrows (up to 160 feet long) in which to bury some of their dead.

There is a connection between the name Enstone and the Hoar Stone. In Saxon times, it was known as the Giant's Stone or Entastan which became Ennestan and subsequently Enstone. At the time of the Enclosure, however, it was referred to as the Hoar Stone which means aged stone or venerable stone.

There is a local legend which says that the stones will return to their places if anyone tries to move them and that on Midsummer's Eve, the Old Soldier travels to the village for a drink!



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