

12. REINSTATEMENT

The second aim of the re-examination in 2022–23 was to assess the current state of survival of the monument and to determine the impact that commercial afforestation may have had on its physical and geochemical state. Since Mann's excavation in 1924, the area around the passage tomb was ploughed in 1988 and a plantation of Sitka spruce established. Although the northern edge of the passage tomb was ploughed through, the remaining cairn appeared unaffected. However, tree roots from a Sitka spruce on the north side and another on the north-western side had grown into

the cairn and had caused some physical disruption to the cairn material, and the monument was found to be badly waterlogged. The change in hydrology and increased soil acidity caused by afforestation seems to have had a serious impact on the preservation of archaeological deposits.

The site was reinstated by carefully replacing the flagstone floor and resetting the two chamber orthostats that had been lowered. The slot trench was also backfilled with stones. The site will be marked out and avoided during future forestry operations and will be afforded a much larger open area during subsequent restocking.