

## **Earth Energies Special Interest Group – Visit to Selsley Long Barrow 15<sup>th</sup> August 2026**

### **Introduction**

The Selsley or Toots \* Long Barrow is an early Neolithic burial mound located on Selsley Common near Stroud and is a protected scheduled monument. It is about 5000 years old and is one of the Cotswolds-Severn group of barrows.

\*Derived from “toot”, an old term for hillock or lookout

### **History**

As far as we know the barrow has never formally been excavated, or if it has, we do not have the recorded results. We know that it has been subjected to numerous partial excavations and one such excavation in 1880 is referenced by O’Neil, H.E. and Grincell, L.V. in 1960 who state “two hollowed stones, from a burying place on Selsley Hill were taken to Stroud. These could have been porthole-entrance or womb-entrance slabs from the barrow”

### **Description**

The barrow is 73.1 metres long and 27.4 metres wide. It is mentioned in L.V. Grincell’s 1936 book “The Ancient Burial Mounds of England” as one of the longest examples on the Cotswolds. Excavations have taken a big slice out of the middle, so it looks more like two shorter barrows joined end to end. It does not have an obvious entrance either, or any distinguishing features, nor visible stones or chambers.

Overall, the barrow is aligned ENE to WSW.

### **Function of Barrows**

Some are earth covered and others are simply cairns constructed of smallish stones. Some have internal chambers, others not. Some have a passageway leading up to internal chambers, and some of these passageways are orientated to the rising or setting of the sun. Generally, they were constructed over just one major flow of underground water. Usually, two major energy lines cross near to the chamber. In some cases, as with smaller cairns and mounds, there is just one major line, with a minor one crossing it. The presence of crossing points of energy lines appears to have been the pre-requisite for the selection of the site. It is now no longer perceived wisdom that the cairns and great mounds functioned primarily as burial sites. Contemporary scholarship regards the passage cairns more as sacred places associated with life, rebirth and regeneration.

## **Dowsing at Selsley Barrow**

Firstly, there is the area around the barrow itself to see if any energy lines can be detected, and if so of what type (type 2,3 or 4 according to Rory Duff), and in what direction. Also to check for any other energy features, such as spirals, nodes or vortexes, often indicating the presence of water.

Secondly, on top of the barrow itself to locate any nodes or presence of water or other vortexes of energy

It would also be interesting to dowse for any connections to other known local barrows or landscape features. The views from the barrow are exceptional so this should help locate other known local sites.

From the description of the barrow above it is clear that there is little if any information on the actual construction of the barrow itself. Therefore, there is a wonderful opportunity to use one's dowsing skills to gain an insight into what the architecture is, or perhaps, was meant to be.

As stated above, contemporary wisdom regards these cairns more as sacred places and as such will have one or more guardian spirits of place. Sometimes when appropriate contact can be made and much learnt about the site itself.

## **Location**

Selsley Common is accessed via the B4066 that connects Uley to Stroud.

The best place to park is the carpark on your left some quarter of a mile from the cattle grid if approaching from Uley direction. If coming from Stroud, the carpark is on your right just before some buildings on your left.

The actual barrow sits on the edge of the Cotswold escarpment and is reached via a short 10-minute walk. On reaching the barrow one is rewarded with magnificent views over the Severn Estuary with the Malvern Hills, Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons beyond, and wonderful views of Stroud as well.

Interestingly many of the barrows in the Cotswold landscape also sit on the edge of the escarpment, such as barrows at Coaley Peak, Selsley and of course Belas Knapp. Perhaps siting these barrows at the escarpment edge gave greater security or perhaps elevated places close to the sky were more revered, connecting the dead to ancestral spirits and the heavens.