



Kate Worthington from Stonewest carving some of the replacement stonework in a mason's shop set up on site.

an open flower and acanthus leaves that completed the ensemble.

A large dentil section to the north-west corner was also replaced, a pineapple being carved in situ by Stonewest's only female carver, Kate Worthington.

The metal in the upper section of the Arch has now had cathodic protection installed by Rowan Technologies. Cathodic

protection is a system of protecting metal against rusting using electrical currents.

The £1.5million conservation project which incorporated 10 tonnes of new Portland limestone in total was made possible by funding from the Department of Culture. The work was completed on time and on budget and has resulted in the Grade I Listed monument being removed from the English Heritage



New stone carving from Stonewest.

Register of Buildings at Risk.

And, according to Sir Neil Cossons, the chairman of English Heritage speaking at the unveiling of the restored Arch, its future is now secure for another 100 years.

He added: "Hyde Park Corner is London's busiest traffic roundabout, but it is also the gateway to London from the west. It is home to a number of other fine monuments, including the Royal Artillery and Machine Gun Memorials.

"For this reason, English



island site can be revitalised and reintegrated with both Hyde Park and Green Park, putting back into this important area of central London both style and character." ■

CREDITS

<i>Client:</i>	English Heritage
<i>Main contractors:</i>	Mansell plc
<i>Stone specialists:</i>	Stonewest Ltd
<i>Cathodic Protection:</i>	Rowan Technologies.

Wellington Arch

Wellington Arch was designed by Decimus Burton in 1825 in the Neoclassical style in which he excelled.

Burton took great pains over designing classical ornamentation and the full-size drawings he produced for Wellington Arch, retained in the Public Record Office, are exemplary pieces of draughtsmanship.

Building of the Arch was completed in 1828. It originally faced Hyde Park Screen and was intended as a royal entrance to Buckingham Palace, which was at the time being remodelled by John Nash as a palace for King George IV.

Burton designed elaborate sculptures and quadriga to go on top of the arch but they were never produced. For 18 years the Arch remained devoid of statuary on top of it. Then, in 1946, Matthew Cotes Wyatt's colossal satiate of the Duke of Wellington on a

horse was hoisted up to the top, effectively transforming the Arch into a pedestal.

The positioning of the statue was bitterly opposed by Burton, who even left £2,000 in his will to pay for its removal. However, Queen Victoria decreed it should remain in place.

With the opening of Victoria railway station in 1874 the traffic around Hyde Park Corner increased significantly and the Arch was causing a bottleneck, so, in 1883, it was moved to its present position, aligned with the top of Constitution Hill rather than being on the same axis as the Screen.

By then the Duke of Wellington had died and it was decided his statue could be removed to the army barracks at Aldershot, where it can still be seen today.

In 1891 the future Edward VII revived the idea of topping the arch with a dramatic four-horse chariot, having seen such a sculpture, called Triumph by Adrian Jones, exhibited

at the Royal Academy.

Lord Michelham commissioned Jones to make a bigger statue for the Arch and Edward VII often visited Jones in his Chelsea studio to see the work progressing, although he never actually saw it on Wellington Arch because he died in 1910, two years before it was finished.

In 1912 Jones's 38-tonne bronze called Peace Descending on the Chariot of War was unceremoniously placed on top of Wellington Arch, where it remains. It was never officially unveiled and Jones received scant recognition for his masterpiece in his lifetime.

The restoration of Wellington Arch included cleaning, repainting and restoring the sculpture, as well as replacing the fixings that keep it in place.

There are rooms within the legs of Wellington Arch and in the early 20th century they housed London's smallest police station with its contingent of 18 officers.

The police station was

shut after the Kensington underpass was built in the 1960s and an air vent was knocked through the north side of the Arch. The Arch received little attention over the following years and in 1997 was placed on the English Heritage Register of Buildings at Risk.

Last year the Arch passed into the management of English Heritage. Almost immediately the scaffolding went up and the English Heritage covers went around it.

It is now uncovered and next spring, once the interior has been decorated, will, for the first time, be open to the public as London's first permanent exhibition centre dedicated to the capital's sculptures, monuments and war memorials. There will also be public access to upper viewing platforms with views over Green Park and Hyde Park and of the Houses of Parliament and the London Eye. It will be possible to hire rooms in the Arch.