



Leaving Certificate History of Art Education Pack

A teacher and student aid to interpreting
the passage tombs and megalithic art of
Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site

The first part of this document is intended for teachers. It outlines Brú na Bóinne as an exceptional archaeological landscape into which aspects of the history of art syllabus can be explored in a practical and accessible manner.

The second part of this document is intended for students during and after their visit to Brú na Bóinne.

Please print on both sides and print monochrome for the clearest image quality.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Eagraíocht
Oideachais, Eolaíochta
agus Chultúir
na Náisiún Aontaithe

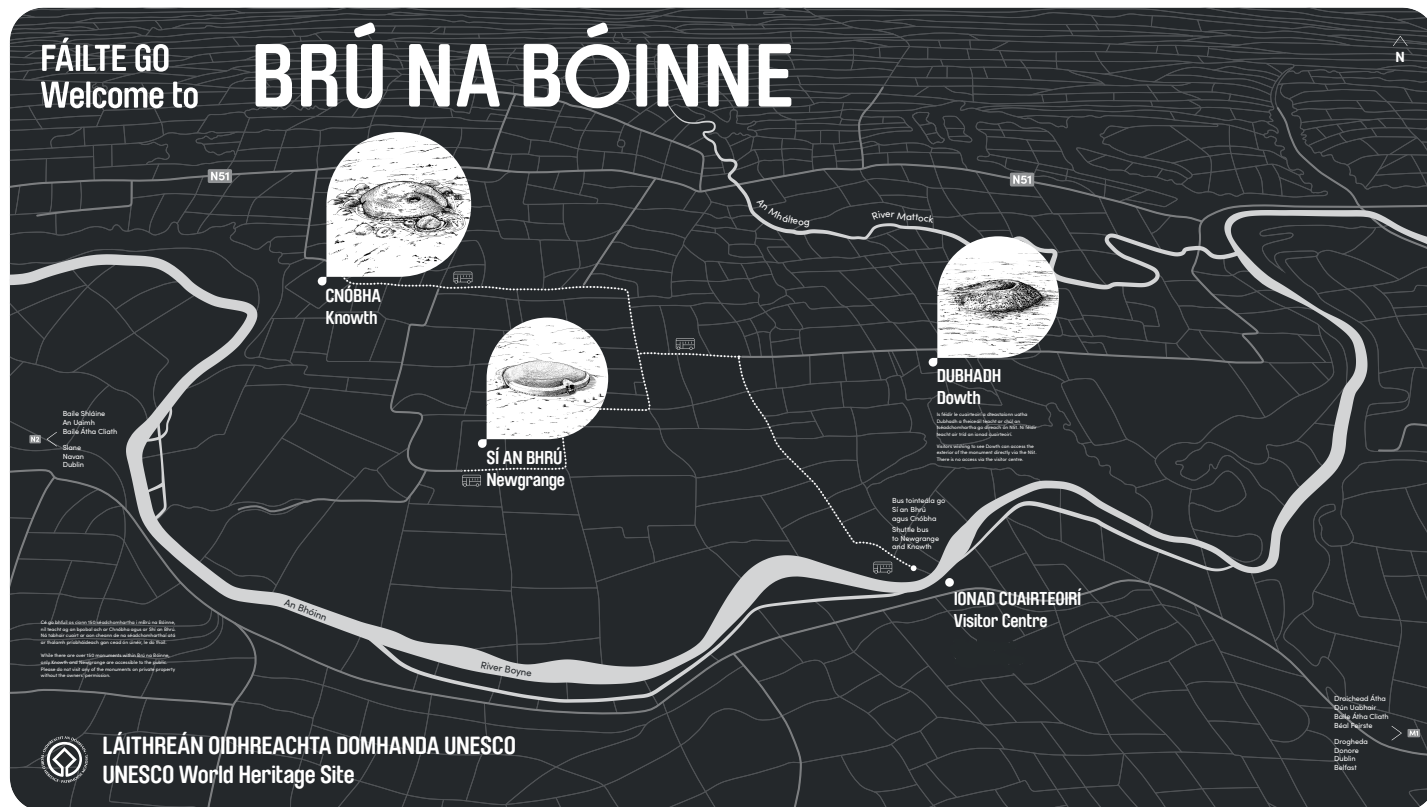


Brú na Bóinne –
Archaeological Ensemble
of the Bend of the Boyne

Brú na Bóinne –
Cnuasach Seandálaíochta
Lúb na Bóinne

INTRODUCTION

Brú na Bóinne or the Palace of the Boyne, is Ireland's richest archaeological landscape. It is located in County Meath, eight kilometres inland from Drogheda and describes an area where the river Boyne meanders into a dramatic loop or bend. Over one hundred and fifty monuments have been identified by archaeologists within this bend of the river but not all of these are visible today. The most prominent of the visible monuments remaining are passage tombs. About forty of these can still be seen. These are dominated by Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth, the largest passage tombs in Europe.



A UNESCO World Heritage Site

World Heritage Sites are places that are important to and belong to everyone regardless of their nationality. They are deemed to be of outstanding universal value to humanity and are approved on the basis of their merits as the best possible examples of cultural or natural heritage. In recognition of its international importance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), inscribed Brú na Bóinne on the list of World Heritage Sites in 1993. The list also includes some of the world's most iconic and important cultural and natural sites like the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal and Uluru.

The passage tombs, associated monuments and Visitor Centre at Brú na Bóinne are in the care of the Government of Ireland

Study and Research

Brú na Bóinne has been intriguing and attracting visitors for centuries. The passage tombs were often understood and explained through the myths and legends told about them. In the 18th and 19th centuries the monuments attracted the curiosity of scholars called antiquarians and more recently were subject to systematic and scientific archaeological investigations.

Much of the information we have on the monuments at Brú na Bóinne is as a result of such investigations. Excavations at Newgrange and Knowth began in 1962 by Professor Michael J. O'Kelly and Professor George Eogan respectively. Investigations at Newgrange lasted thirteen years, while those at Knowth lasted nearly forty. Study and research is still ongoing at Brú na Bóinne and technological advances aid the science of archaeology and our understanding of life and death in Brú na Bóinne in ancient times.

LIFE IN NEOLITHIC BRÚ NA BÓINNE

The earliest inhabitants of Ireland arrived around 8000 BC. They were hunter-gatherers and had a nomadic lifestyle, hunting wildlife such as red deer and wild boar and gathering naturally occurring foods like nuts and berries. This was the Mesolithic period and lasted from 8000 BC – 4500 BC. By 4000 BC the introduction of new people bringing farming techniques brought a huge change in lifestyle.

This was the beginning of the Neolithic period which lasted from approximately 4000 BC – 2500 BC.

Farming

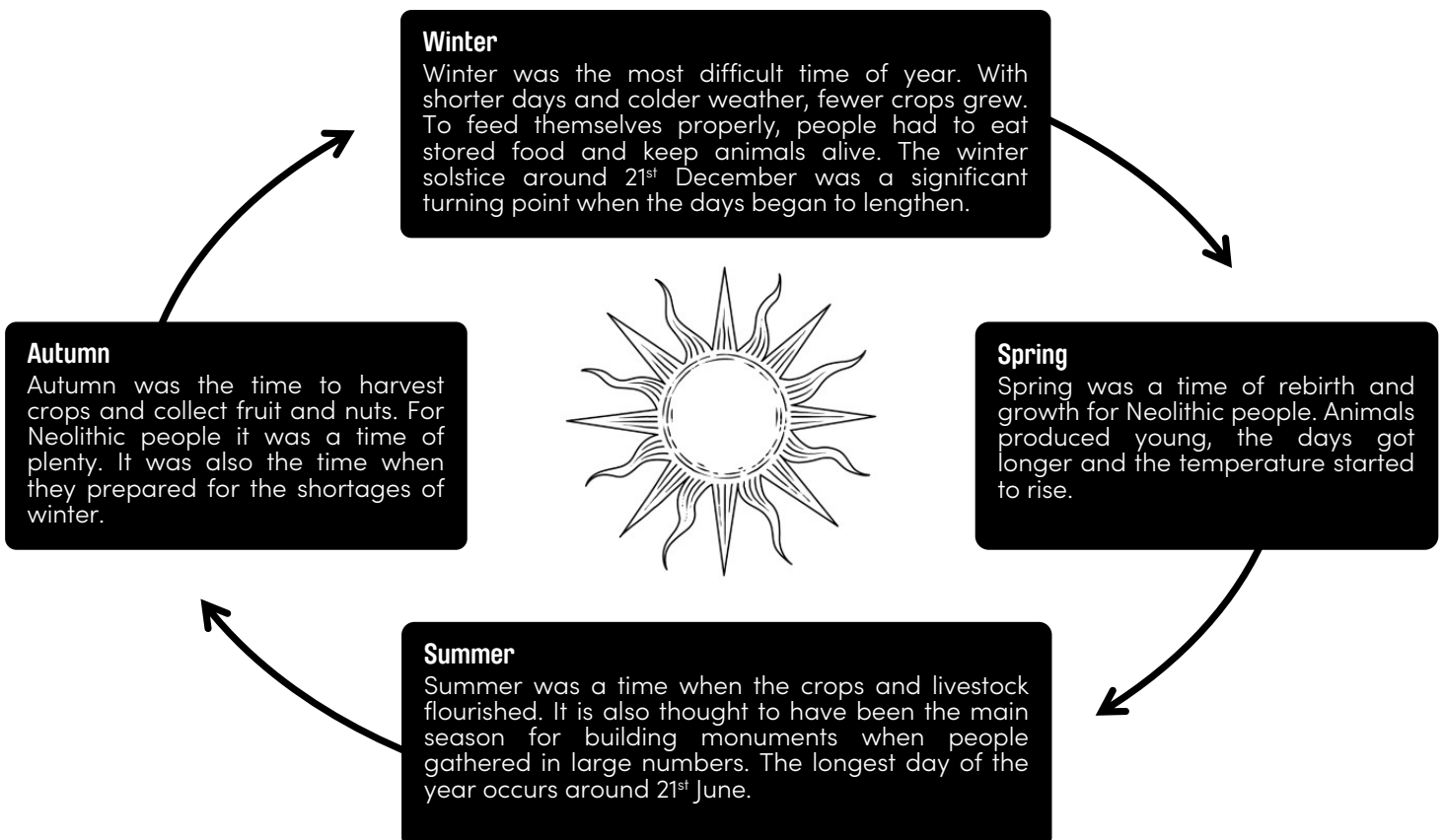
When the first farmers arrived, most of the country was densely forested. In order to commence farming, Neolithic people had to clear small areas of woodland. Once this was done, ploughs were then used to till the land in preparation for the sowing of crops. Crops such as wheat and barley (used in porridge and bread making) were cultivated, while the domestication of livestock such as cattle, pigs and sheep was also being developed. Hunting, fishing and foraging continued to be practised and supplemented the farmed produce.

The River

The river was an essential resource for this newly emerging farming society. The Boyne, acting almost like a Neolithic motorway, provided transport and communication. However, it also served as a fresh water source for cleaning and drinking while the seasonal migration of salmon would have been a very welcome additional source of food for these opportunistic people. The Boyne Valley provided an excellent environment for these settlements to acquire the wealth, skills and workforce that enabled these early inhabitants to construct their monuments

The Seasons

As farmers and hunters, Neolithic people were highly dependent on the seasons and were tied closely to the land.



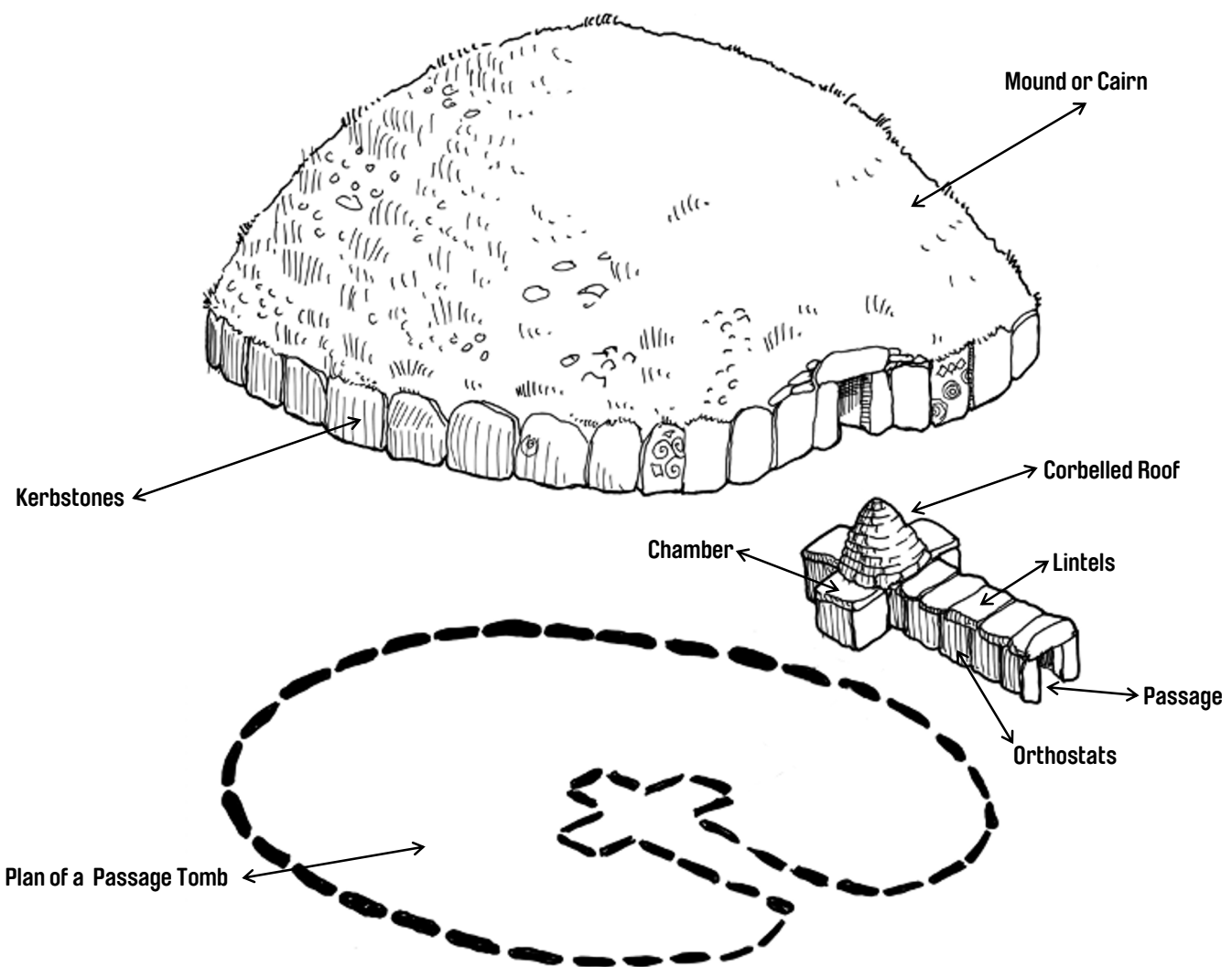
DEATH IN NEOLITHIC BRÚ NA BÓINNE

As the Neolithic society flourished developing their domestic needs, their attentions soon turned to their spiritual needs. Neolithic people must have believed in an afterlife. They began to construct tombs built from stone to place the remains of their dead inside. These tombs initially were relatively simple with portal tombs (also known as dolmens) in the early Neolithic. As their religious beliefs and practices changed, different tombs were developed and constructed in the form of court tombs and passage tombs.

Passage Tombs

Passage tombs are so called because the structure consists of a narrow passage ending in a small chamber where human remains were found. The passage and chamber is then completely covered in a cairn (circular mound of small stones). The cairn is then enclosed at the base by large stone slabs called kerbstones. There are approximately 40 passage tombs in Brú na Bóinne. Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth are the largest passage tombs.

These passage tombs were not all built at the same time, 4 distinct phases are evident spanning from approximately 3400BC – 2800BC.



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DEATH IN NEOLITHIC BRÚ NA BÓINNE

Building the Passage Tombs

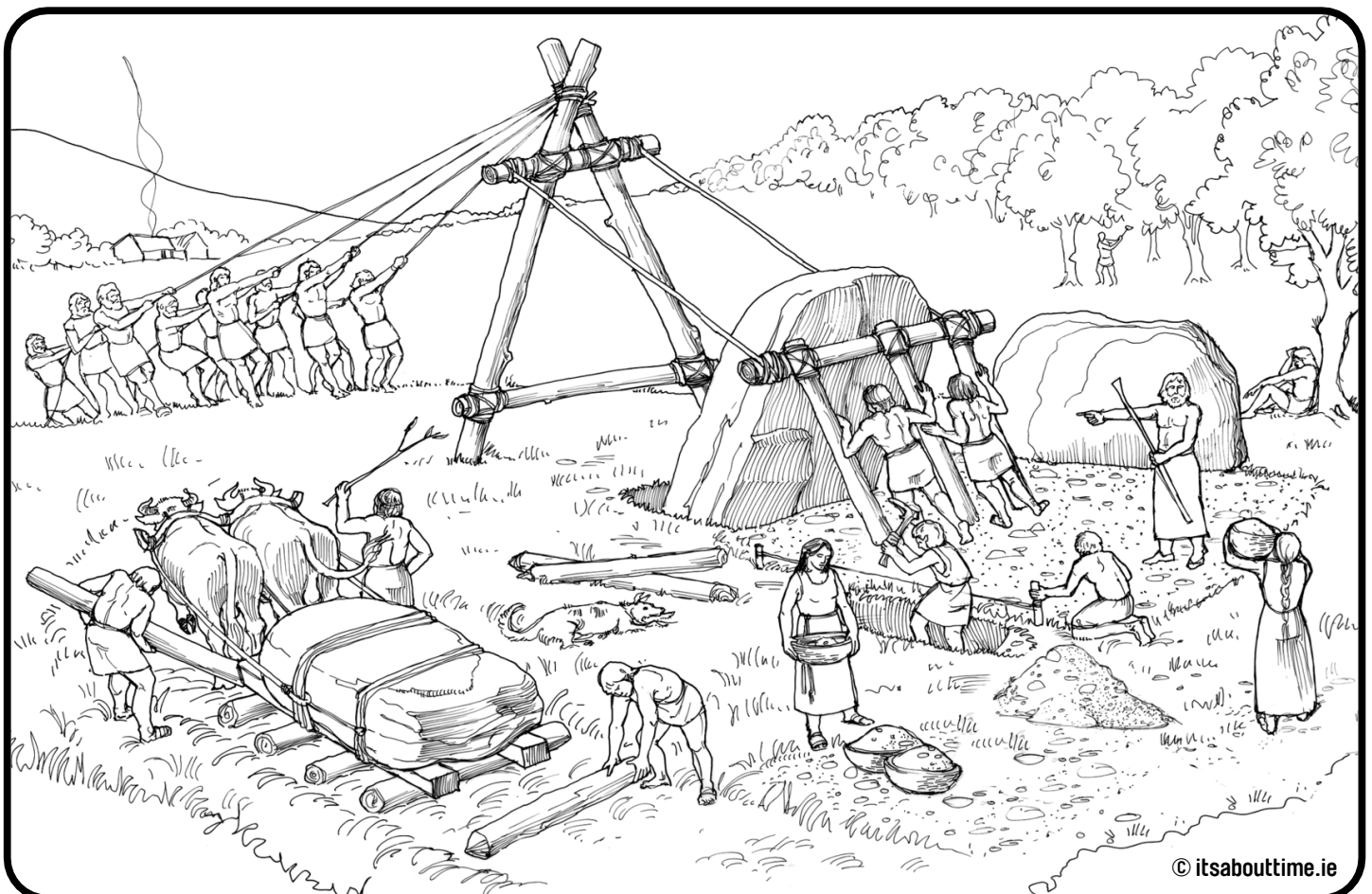
Great effort and time was needed for the planning, gathering of materials and construction of these monuments. This is clearly evident from the vast distances the builders travelled to acquire the particular stone types. The majority of structural stones in the Brú na Bóinne tombs are greywacke. This stone type was quarried in the Clogherhead area, north of Drogheda and transported along sea and river, then finally logrolled from a docking point on the Boyne up to the construction site.

The façade at Newgrange and settings at the entrances at Knowth, consists of white quartz, which has its origins in the Wicklow Mountains to the south of the site.

Granite stones were collected from the North shore of Dundalk Bay. The long distances involved suggest a sea-faring route may have been a more practical choice than travelling across land. The majority of the cairn consists of river rolled stone acquired from the banks and terraces of the river Boyne around 1km below the monument. It is estimated that some 200,000 tonnes of material are present in the largest cairns.



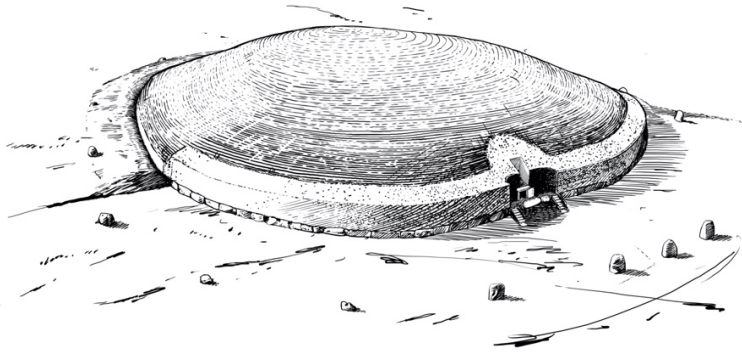
Today we cannot be certain of the building practices used by this Neolithic culture. Archaeologists have suggested various theories. It is most likely that logrolling, the erection of wooden scaffolding and earthen ramps were employed.



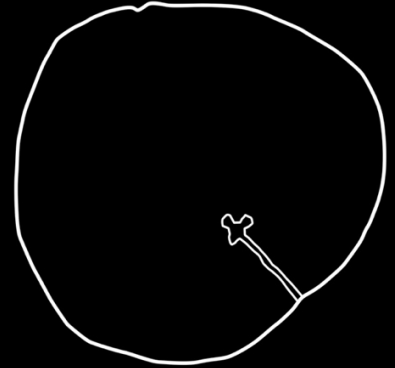
DEATH IN NEOLITHIC BRÚ NA BÓINNE

The three great mounds of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth are the largest passage tombs in Europe.

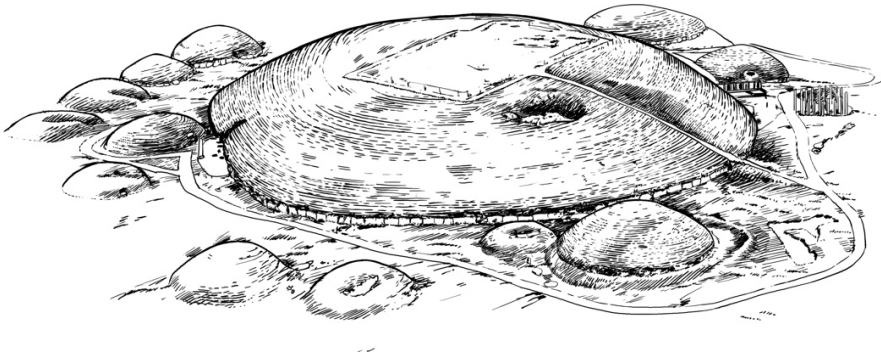
Newgrange



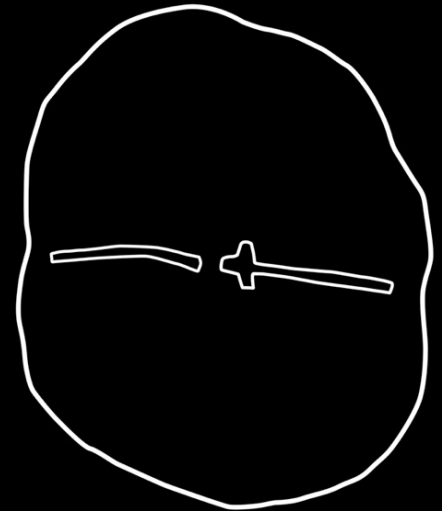
Plan of the mound at Newgrange



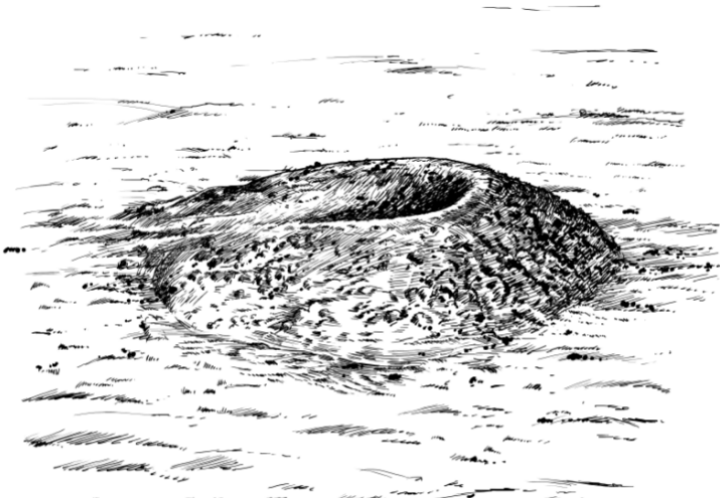
Knowth



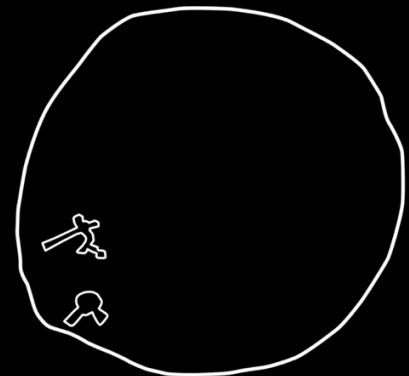
Plan of the mound at Knowth



Dowth

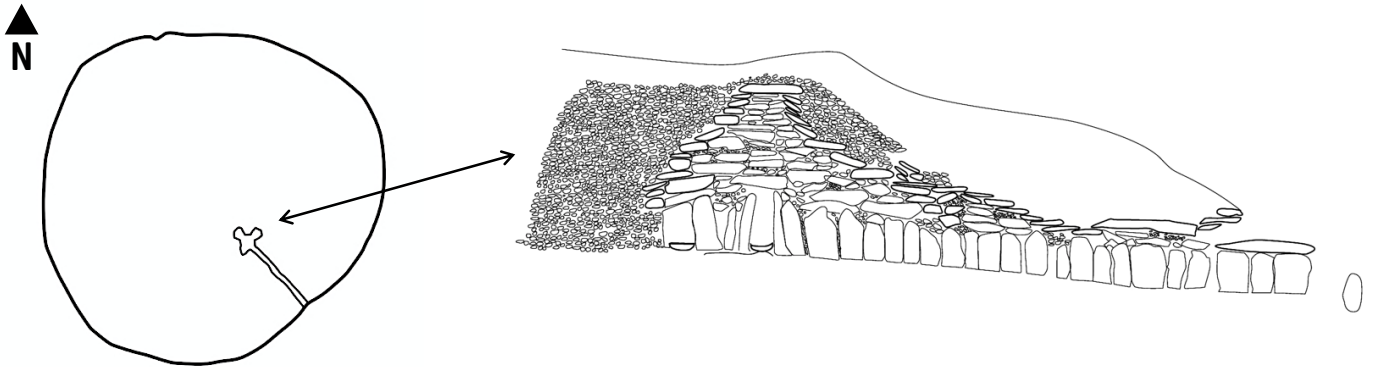


Plan of the mound at Dowth



NEWGRANGE

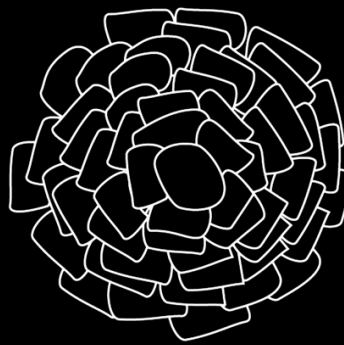
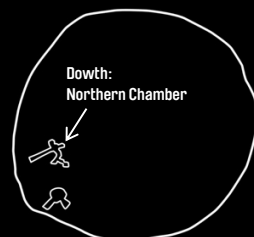
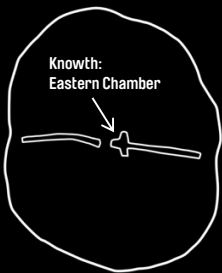
The great mound at Newgrange was constructed in approximately 3200 BC. The cairn covers an area of just less than half a hectare and is around 11m high and has an average diameter of 80m. The cairn is encircled by 97 kerbstones and a further 450 similar large stones make up the passage and chamber structure. The front section (now restored with the original stone found on site during the excavations) is faced with a white quartz wall randomly interspersed with sea-rolled granite boulders. The passage faces towards the southeast and is 19m long. The passage is lined with orthostats, 21 on the right and 22 on the left. The chamber is cruciform or cross-shaped containing 3 recesses or side chambers. The right hand (Eastern) recess is the largest and most decorated, containing 2 stone basins. The roof of the chamber is a corbelled vault, which rises 6m above ground level.



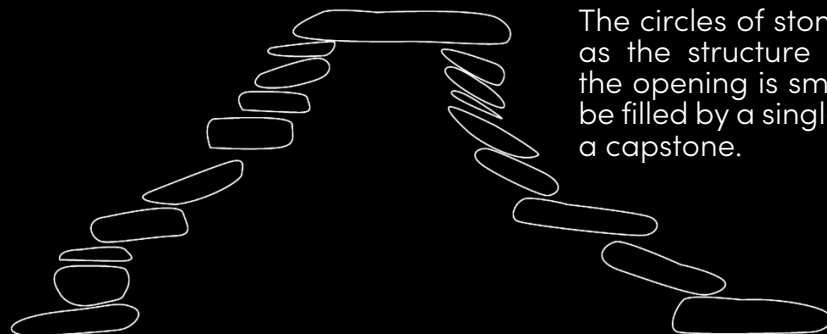
Cross Section of the tomb in the Great Mound at Newgrange

Corbel Vaulting

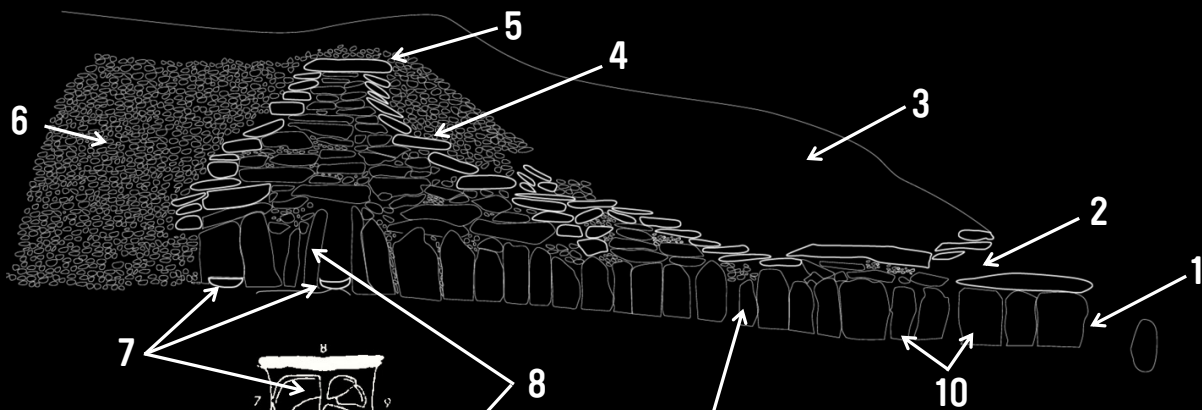
The chamber at Newgrange, the eastern chamber at Knowth and the northern chamber at Dowth all have corbel vaulted roofs.



Large slabs are placed in a circle. Another circle of slabs are placed above that.




The circles of stone get smaller as the structure ascends until the opening is small enough to be filled by a single stone called a capstone.



Key Features at Newgrange

1. Entrance to Passage
2. Roof box
3. The Mound
4. Corbel Vaulted Roof
5. Cap Stone of Roof
6. Cairn Stones
7. Basin Stones (4)
8. The Chamber
9. The Passage
10. Orthostats

 = Decorated Stones in the Chamber and Passage

K = Kerbstones: 1 - 97

L = Orthostats on the left side of the passage: 1 - 22

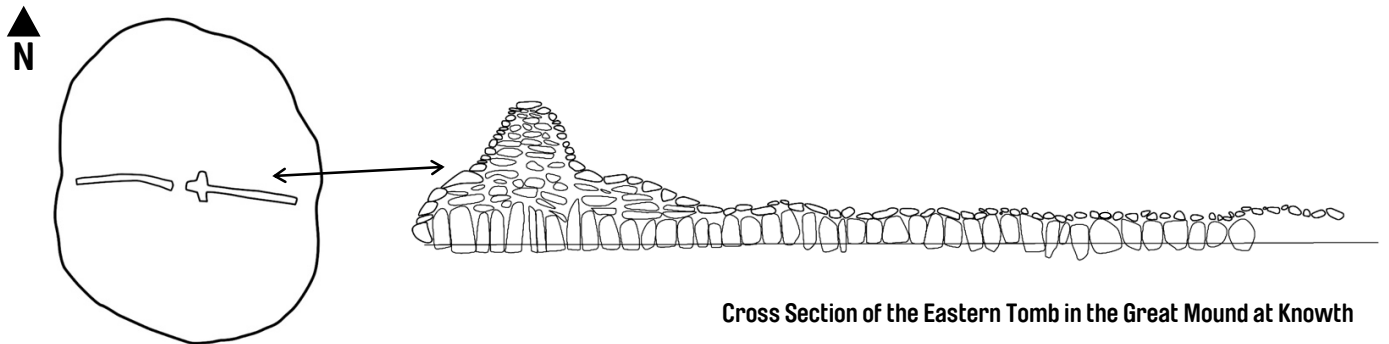
R = Orthostats on the right side of the passage: 1 - 21

C = Orthostats in the Chamber: 1 - 17



KNOWTH

The complex at Knowth consists of one large mound surrounded by eighteen smaller mounds. The large mound is known as Site 1. It contains two separate passage tombs. These face approximately east and west. The tombs do not connect, there is approximately 5m between them. The mound covers over half a hectare and is 95m across at its widest point. Around the entrances to the tombs are settings of unusual stones such as quartz, granite and banded stones. The smaller tombs vary in size, some of which predate the large tomb.



Cross Section of the Eastern Tomb in the Great Mound at Knowth

Knowth's Eastern Tomb

The eastern tomb at Knowth consists of a long passage leading into a chamber with three side recesses and a beehive shaped roof built by corbelling. The combined length of the passage and chamber would originally have been over 40m in length and the capstone of the chamber roof is 6m above the floor. All three recesses contained a basin stone or shaped stones which held the remains of the dead.

Knowth's Western Tomb

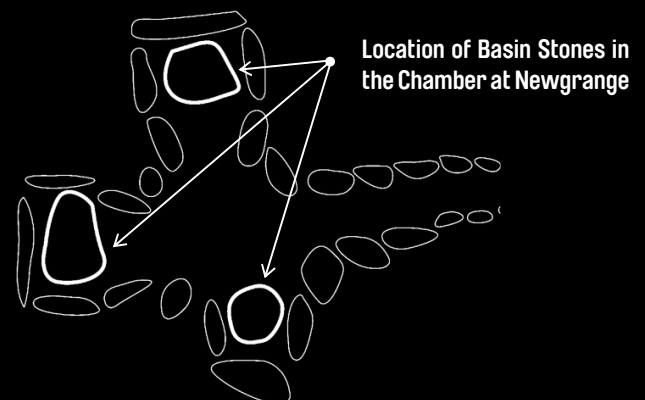
The western tomb would originally have been over 34m in total length. Its narrow passage bends to the right about three quarters of the way into the tomb. Just after the bend, there is a sill-stone and after that the passage narrows to a width of just 40cm. The passage then widens again and finally forms a rectangular shaped chamber about 2m in height, roofed with a huge 2m long stone. The basin stone now lying in the passage would originally have been in the chamber area.

Basin Stones

All three of the great passage tombs of Brú na Bóinne contain basin stones in their chambers. These are carved and shaped stones and in some cases were decorated with megalithic art. Basin stones were placed in the recesses of a chamber.

The remains of the dead were placed on the basin stones. Cremation was the main way of treating the dead and this took place away from the passage tombs. Some of the human remains were not burnt.

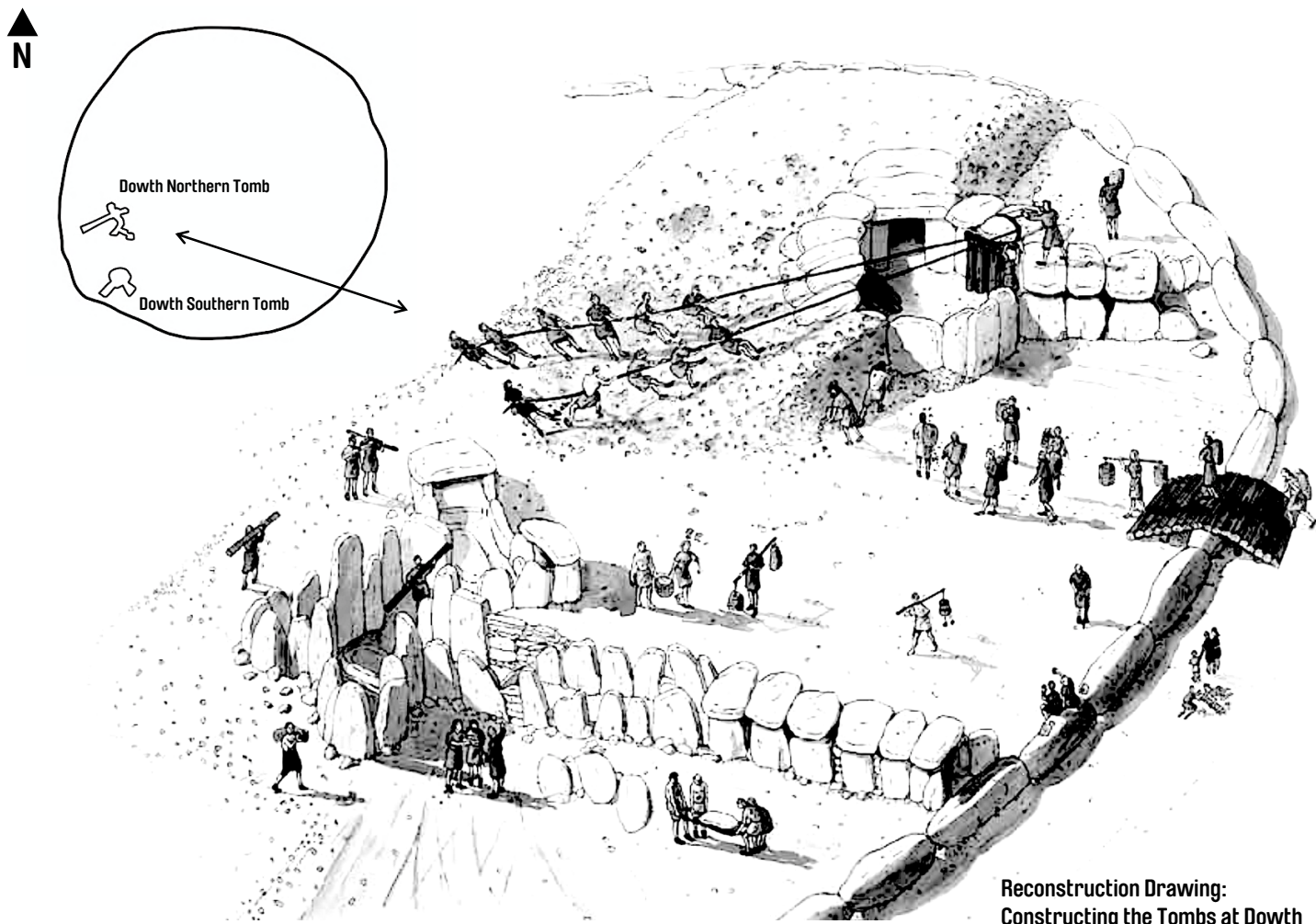
Excavations at Newgrange revealed the remains of 5 individuals and at Knowth more than 200. Several objects or artefacts were also found mixed with the remains for example polished stone balls, stone and bone pendants and antler pins. An exquisitely carved macehead was found in the eastern tomb at Knowth.



Decorated Basin Stones from the Eastern Chamber at Knowth

DOWTH

Dowth is the least well known of the three great tombs of Brú na Bóinne. Although as large as Newgrange and Knowth, it has not been excavated in recent times. Like the other passage tombs, Dowth was built over 5,000 years ago. The mound is approximately 85m in diameter and there are an estimated 115 kerbstones, only about half of which are visible. At its highest part, it is over 15m but it is likely that it was lower originally and this high point represents dug up material that was piled up on the mound. In 1847 extensive digging took place on the mound in an attempt to find a central chamber. Subsequently the mound was subject to quarrying. Like Knowth, Dowth has two chambers in the mound located on the same side within 25m of each other. The passages are considerably shorter than those found at Newgrange and at Knowth but the chambers are as large and contain some of the biggest stones found at any of the monuments.



Reconstruction Drawing:
Constructing the Tombs at Dowth

Dowth's Northern Tomb

The passage of this tomb is at present 8.2m long and is divided by three sill stones. The passage leads into a cruciform chamber with three side recesses. There is a low 3m corbelled roof. A large stone basin (1.4m x 1m) lies on the floor of the central chamber. The four huge stones that define the chamber space are almost 3m high. Off the right hand recess is a most unusual feature. It is called the annexe and there are a further two chambers there.

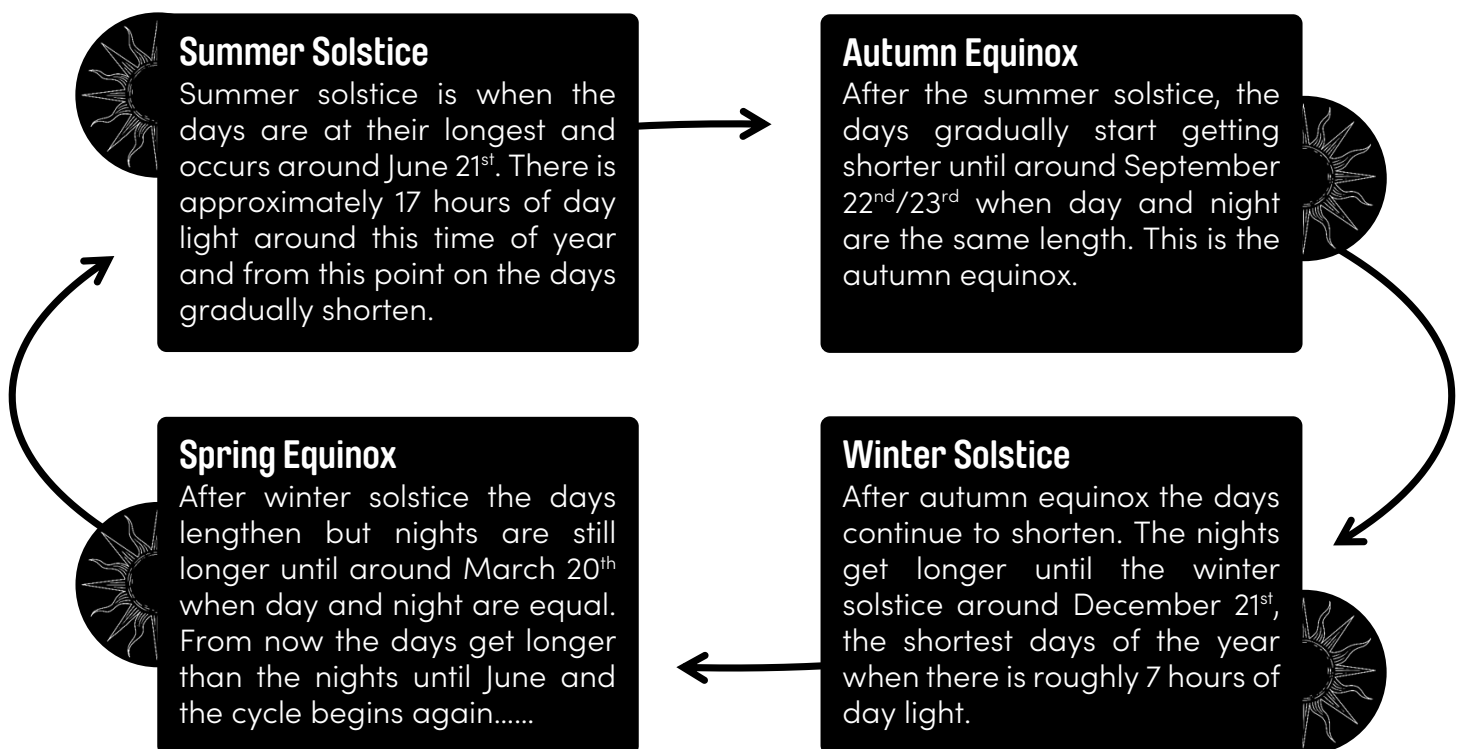
Dowth's Southern Tomb

This is a small tomb in comparison with Dowth North. A short 3.3m passage leads into an almost circular chamber with one recess. The roof of the main chamber is a modern concrete one: it is possible its original roof was corbelled. The recess to the right is separated from the main chamber by a sill stone.

THE SUN AT BRÚ NA BÓINNE

As a farming community, Neolithic people would have observed the sun's movement in the sky. They mapped the sun's arc from sun rise to sun set across the horizon as the year progressed. When the sun's arc was at its longest and highest, it was summer, a time of plenty with long days and short nights. However, when the sun's arc was low and short from sun rise to sun set it was winter, the most difficult time of year when the nights were longer than the days. The link between the sun and how fruitful the earth was must have been very apparent from their observations.

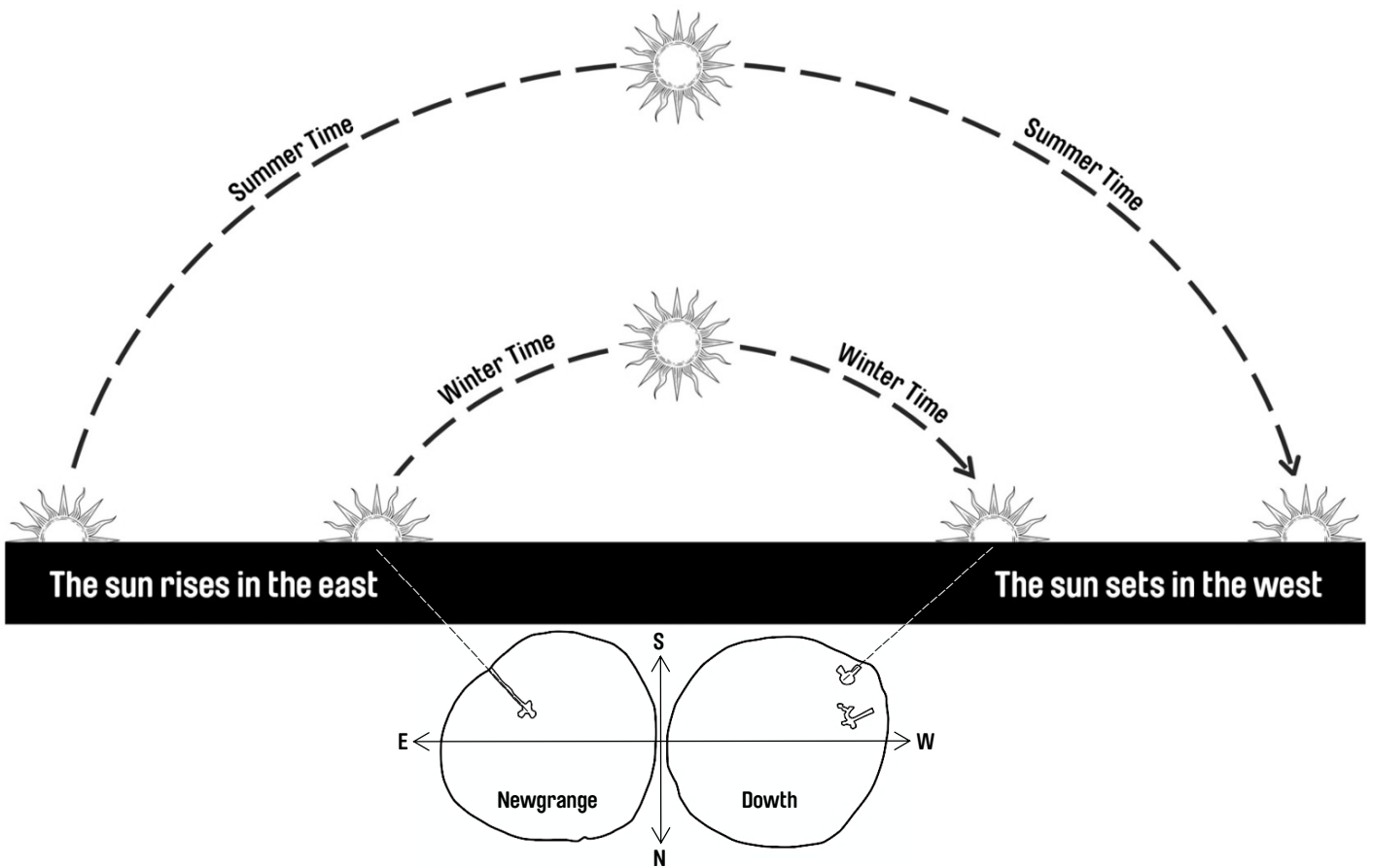
There are 4 significant turning points in the solar calendar – summer and winter solstice and spring and autumn equinox.



These junctions in the solar calendar were so significant to Neolithic people that they built some of their monumental structures aligned with key points in the sun's journey across the sky.

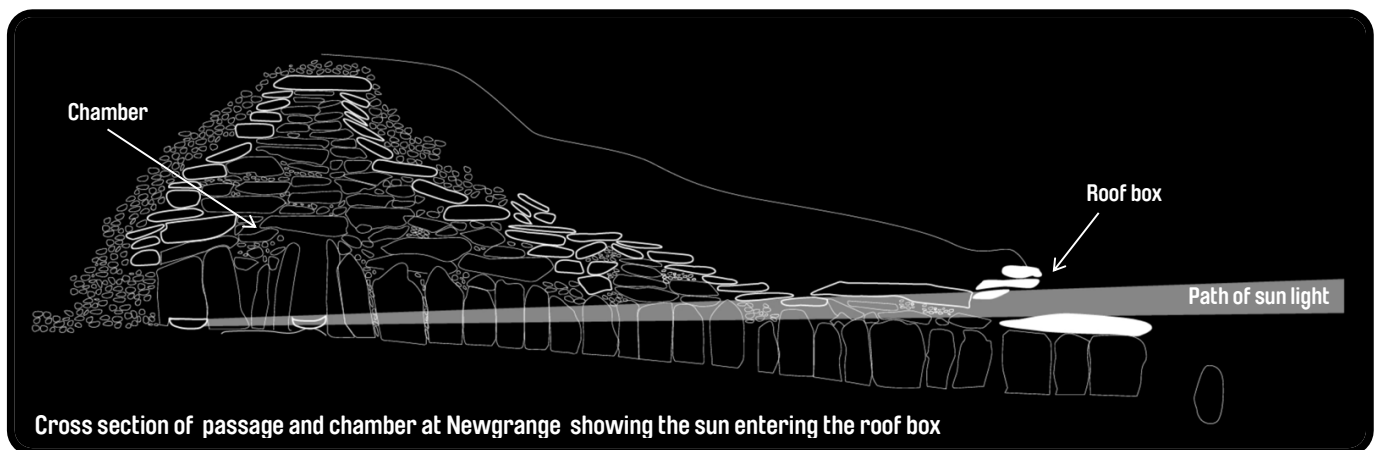
It is no surprise that solar alignments have been discovered at passage tombs in the Boyne Valley. The passage tombs were multi-functional sites, used not just for burial but for ritual, celebration and worship. The monuments were focal points for a number of social gatherings and religious ceremonies.

There is no shortage of speculation as to why some passage tombs have solar alignments. Was its significance of a practical nature or more spiritual? Many believe that the sun was worshipped as a deity and just as it revives the earth and brings new life at springtime, it may have similarly revived the spirits of the ancestors within the tomb. We may never know what the exact function of these monuments were but we can safely say that this Neolithic society were not only skilled builders and astronomers but also had a respect for their dead and a belief in an afterlife.



Newgrange

The passage and chamber inside are aligned in a south-easterly direction, facing the rising sun on the winter solstice. A small window-like opening above the doorway known as the roof box allows the mid-winter rising sun to penetrate the central burial chamber and dramatically illuminate it. This event can last for up to 17 minutes depending on weather conditions. The phenomenon is not limited to just one day, but can occur on any morning between the 18th and 23rd of December.

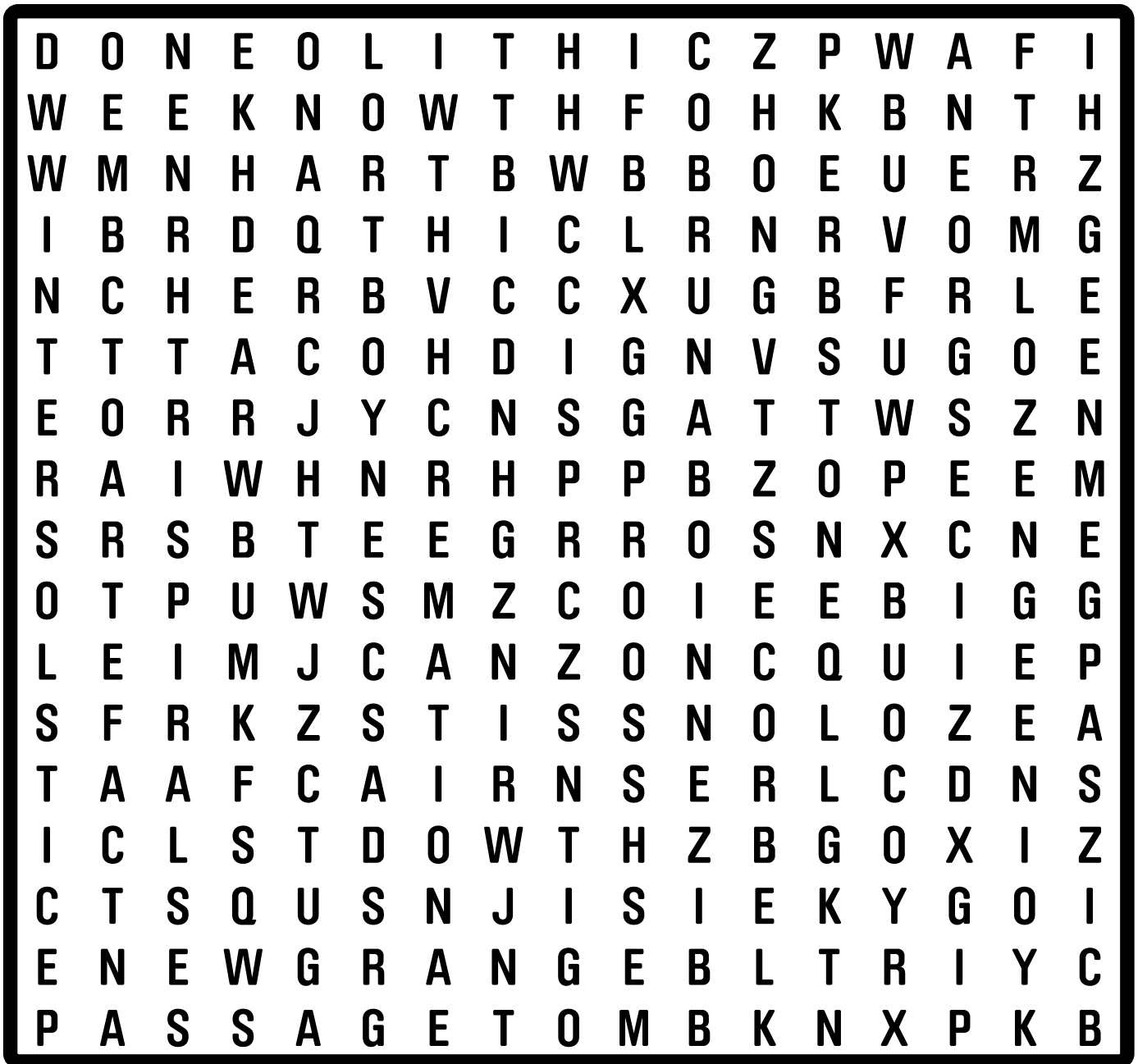


Dowth

The southern passage and chamber are aligned in a south-westerly direction, facing the setting sun on the winter solstice. There is no roof box at Dowth. The sun shines through the entrance of the passage. As the passage is relatively short, the alignment isn't as precise in comparison to that of Newgrange and can occur over a number of weeks around the winter solstice. The illumination of the chamber can last for about an hour depending on weather conditions.

WORK IN THE CLASS ROOM

Brú na Bóinne Word Search – up, down & diagonal



ART ARTEFACT BOYNE BRU NA BOINNE CAIRN CHEVRON

CORBEL CREMATION DENDROCHRONOLOGY DIG DOWTH

KERBSTONE KNOWTH LOZENGE NEOLITHIC NEWGRANGE

PASSAGE TOMB TRISPIRAL WINTER SOLSTICE

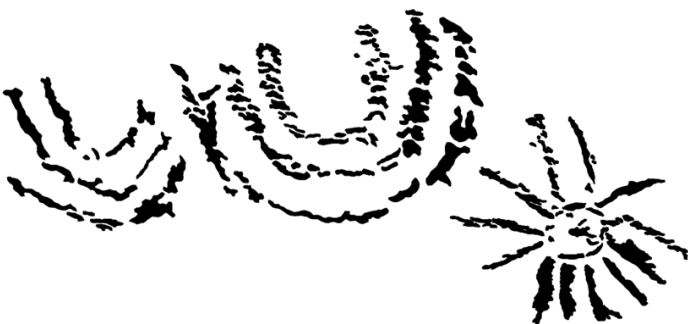
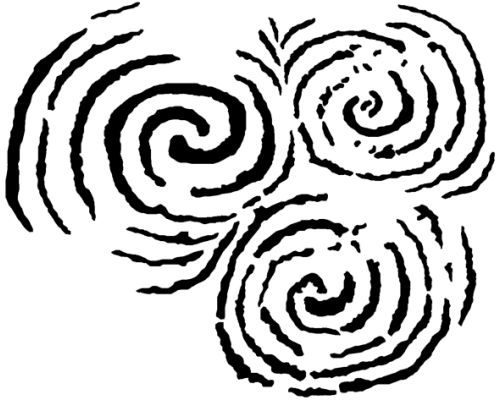
WORK IN THE CLASS ROOM

Draw the Knowth Macehead



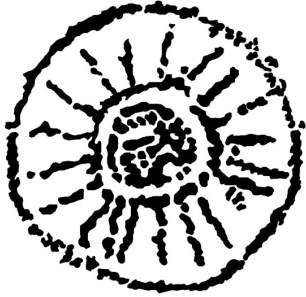
WORK IN THE CLASS ROOM

Copy the Megalithic Art



WORK IN THE CLASS ROOM

Copy the Megalithic Art



WORK IN THE CLASS ROOM

Higher Level Exam Questions

1. Name, describe and discuss two different types of Stone Age monument found in Ireland. Refer in your answer to the form, function and construction techniques of each of the examples you have chosen.
And
Briefly describe and discuss what you know about the communities that created these stone monuments.
Illustrate your answer.
2. There are many documented Stone Age tombs in Ireland that reveal a wealth of information about the lives of the people who built them.
Discuss this statement with reference to two named stone tombs that you have studied. In your answer refer to the structure, function and location of each of the examples you have chosen.
And
Briefly describe and discuss the motifs and stone working techniques used to decorate Stone Age tombs.
Illustrate your answer.
3. It can be argued that the most impressive early tombs in Ireland were passage graves.
Discuss this statement with reference to one named passage grave and two other types of named tombs from either the Mesolithic or Neolithic periods. In your answer describe and discuss their structure, decoration, and location.
And
Briefly discuss what you know about the people who built these tombs and their spiritual beliefs.
Illustrate your answer.

Ordinary Level Exam Questions

4. Kerbstone 52, is found at one of Ireland's most significant Neolithic sites.
Answer (a), (b), and (c).
(a) Name this site.
(b) Describe and discuss the decoration and carving techniques used on Kerbstone 52.
(c) Name, briefly describe and discuss one other stone carving from this period.
Illustrate your answer.
5. Newgrange is an example of a pre-Christian monument.
Answer (a), (b) and (c).
(a) What was its function?
(b) Describe and discuss the location of Newgrange and explain why it was built there.
(c) Briefly describe and discuss the decoration on one of the monument's main features.
Illustrate your answer.
6. Newgrange is from the Neolithic period.
Answer (a) and (b)
(a) Describe and discuss the site under the following headings:
location, structure and function.
(b) Sketch, describe and discuss the decoration on one of this site's main features.
Illustrate your answer.

MEGALITHIC ART AT BRÚ NA BÓINNE

The megalithic art at Brú na Bóinne is on a scale not found anywhere else in the world.

There are over 380 known decorated stones at Knowth alone. Newgrange has 116 decorated stones and Dowth has 38.

The art on the structural stones of passage tombs is known as megalithic art. The word megalithic, derives from the Greek words, *Mega* meaning large and *Lithos* meaning stone.

Stone tools, picks or chisels, made of flint or quartz, were used to create the art.

Megalithic art from the Neolithic period, consists of a series of geometric and abstract motifs, which are picked or incised onto the surface of the stones. The motifs include circles, spirals, zig-zags, lozenges and snake-like forms, sometimes in combination.

The art at Brú na Bóinne is often linked to the shape and surface of each stone and its location within the monument.

Carving was sometimes found on the surfaces of stones now hidden, proving that the artwork was created before those stones were put into place.

Some stones were also reused, with existing art incorporated into, or covered by, new designs.

The art at Brú na Bóinne shows the work of many artists, some more experienced than others.



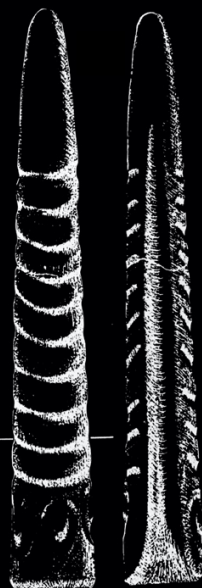
To qualify as a World Heritage Site, there are a number of criteria that must be met. One of which is:

'to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius'

The monuments of Brú na Bóinne represent the largest and most important expression of prehistoric plastic art in Europe.

Portable Art

However, not all Neolithic art is megalithic art. Some falls into the category of portable art, which occurs on artefacts such as jewellery, pottery and maceheads. The function of the ornament, if indeed any, is unknown. Whatever the significance might have been, there is no doubt that a great deal of skill, time and energy was needed to produce the carvings and art pieces especially when we consider that only stone tools were available at that time.



Stone buttons found in Dowth



Decorated stone object found in the Western Chamber at Knowth



Decorated Macehead found in the Eastern Chamber at Knowth

MEGALITHIC ART AT BRÚ NA BÓINNE

Techniques

Two main techniques were used in applying the art:

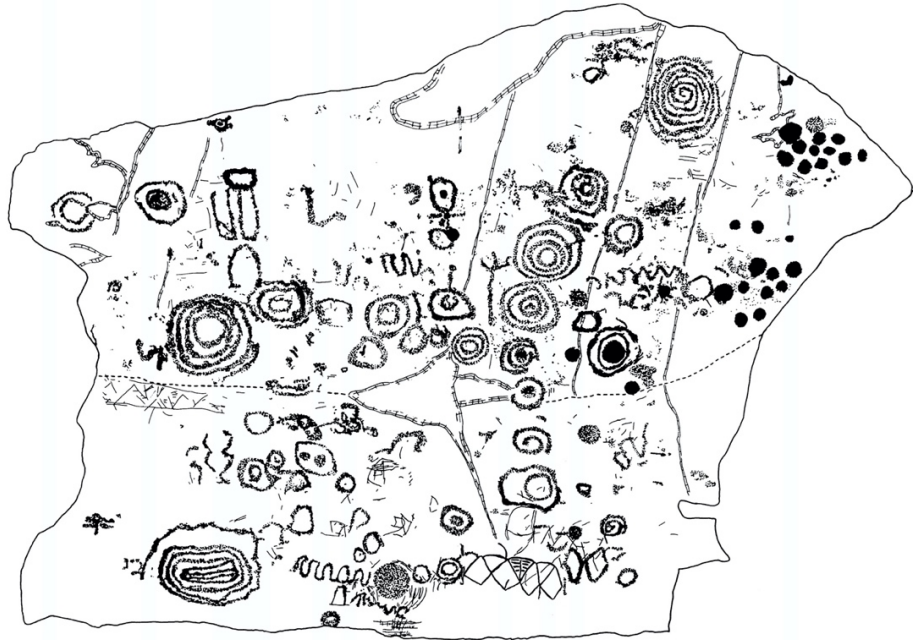
Incision: This involved the drawing of a pointed implement along the surface of the stone, scratching or etching out designs.

Picking: This was the predominant technique used by the artists and involved using a sharp point, possibly of flint or quartz, holding the implement like a chisel or punch and hammering out designs on the surface of the stone.

Styles

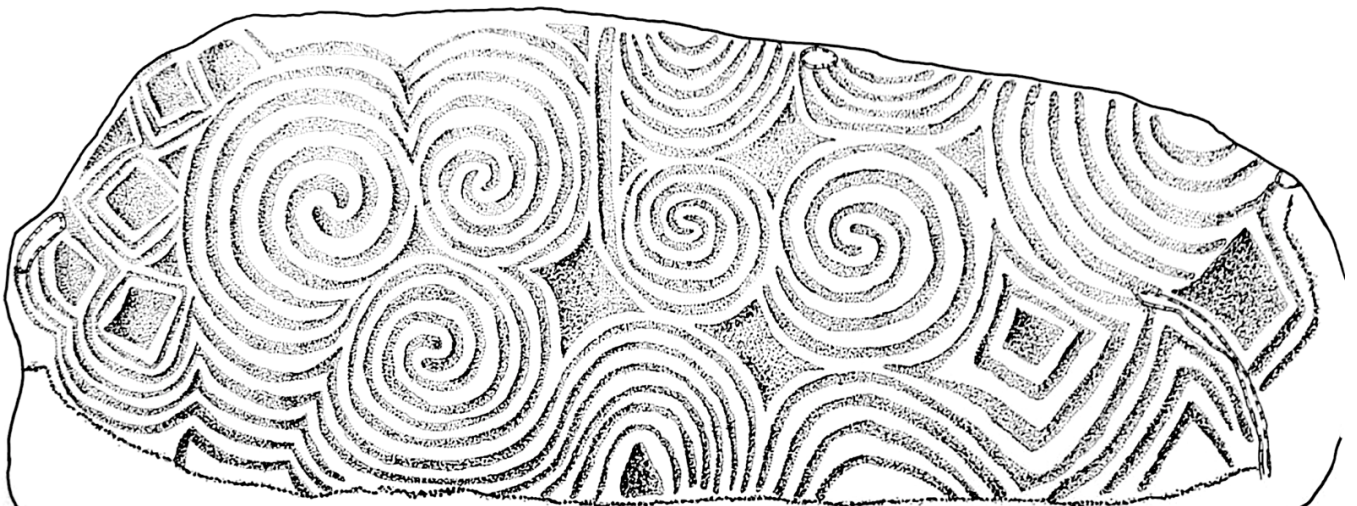
Dr. Muiris O'Súilleabháin, identified two styles:

Standard Style: This is likely an earlier style where the motif was lightly picked or incised onto the surface of the stone. The composition of the individual motifs are generally randomly arranged although can occur neatly organised. The visual impact of the symbols may not have concerned the artist(s) as they are often hard to distinguish or, in some cases, were hidden soon after they were carved by other parts of the structure.



Reverse side of K13 at Newgrange © C.O'Kelly

Plastic Style: This style is possibly an evolution from the standard style. The artist(s) worked with the natural contours of a stone's surface creating a sculptured effect. The motifs cover as much of the stone's surface as possible. This style adds visual grandeur and enhances the architectural impact of the monuments. Stones with the plastic style are positioned in prominent locations within the structure and they are never hidden. Plastic style art often disregarded the presence of standard style, it either cut through it or covered it.



Front side of K1, the Entrance Stone at Newgrange © C.O'Kelly

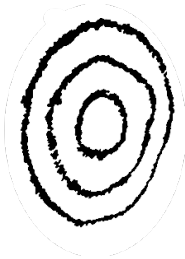


MEGALITHIC ART AT BRÚ NA BÓINNE

Motifs

Claire O'Kelly identified 10 categories of motifs used by the Neolithic artists of the Boyne Valley:

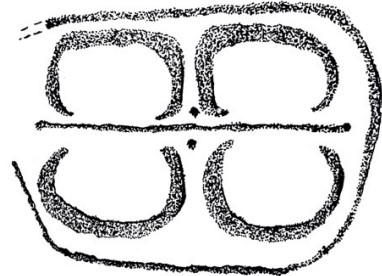
5 are Curvilinear



Circles



Spirals



Arcs or Crescents

© G. Eogan



Serpentiform



Dot in Circle

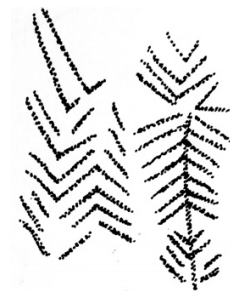
5 are Rectilinear



Zig Zags or Chevrons



Lozenges

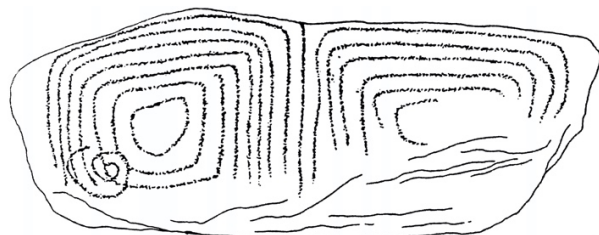


Offset or Comb Device

© C. O'Kelly



Radials



Parallel Lines

© G. Eogan

MEGALITHIC ART AT BRÚ NA BÓINNE

Megalithic art is one of the most mysterious and discussed aspects of the Brú na Bóinne complex. These abstract symbols expressed the thoughts and ideas of Neolithic people in a code we can no longer decipher.

What were Neolithic people expressing in these motifs?

Were the motifs an ancient pictorial form of communication?

It is not known what languages Neolithic people spoke. A motif, such as a spiral can be found on stones in an individual tomb at Brú na Bóinne. They can also be found in other tombs in Ireland as well as in other European countries.

Did the spiral have the same meaning in all these locations and did the meaning change when it was combined with other or different motifs?

Were the motifs representations of humans (anthropomorphic) or animals (zoomorphic)?

There is a tendency for us to look for the familiar and it is natural for us to try and identify images on the stones.

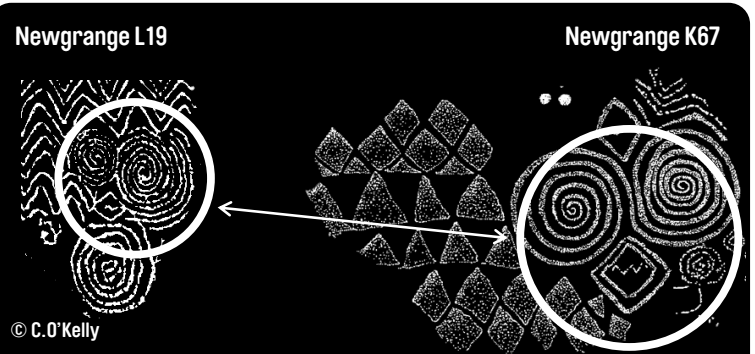
Stone age artists possessed the capability to create representational art as seen in the much earlier Lascaux cave paintings. During the Neolithic period there was a move to more abstract design.

If Neolithic artists were capable of creating clear human or animal forms why didn't they? Was there a change that resulted in how Neolithic people saw their place in the world – the familiar natural world was no longer their focus?

Were the motifs representing solar, lunar and stellar images and cycles?

As a farming culture, Neolithic people would have observed the sun's influence on their world. The moon's regular cycle was a way of calculating time but also influenced coastal tides. Stars, planets and the Milky Way were all visible in the sky and along with irregular events such as comets or eclipses, must have been a source of intrigue.

Were the motifs records of the movement of these celestial bodies and of Neolithic people's understanding of these events and what they represented?



Two Spirals together (not connected) on L19 in the passage and a double spiral on K67 (connected) – did the meaning of a motif change if it was connected to another or if it was arranged next to other motifs?

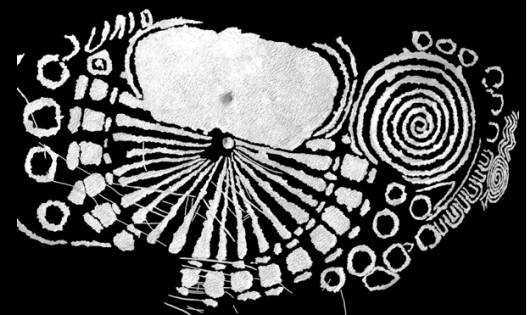
Knowth Orthostat 49 Western Passage

This orthostat is often referred to as the 'Guardian' Stone. Is this the face of a deity protecting the Western tomb at Knowth?



Knowth K15

This kerbstone is often referred to as the 'Sundial' Stone. Do the lines radiating from the dot show the direction of the rising and setting sun or moon?



MEGALITHIC ART AT BRÚ NA BÓINNE

Were the motifs the result of being in an altered state of consciousness?

Research in controlled environments has shown that during the early stages of entering altered states of consciousness, people hallucinate and see various geometric patterns. Shaman may have entered these states by consuming naturally occurring hallucinogens, by sleep or light deprivation or by frenetic dancing or repetitive drumming. Was it the shaman's role in this society to interpret these images as messages from the world of the spirits or from deities?

Were the motifs meant to aid meditation?

Concentrating and following the lines and shapes of various motifs could have been used as a meditation device to lower blood pressure, slow down breathing and decrease metabolism so the person was physically and spiritually prepared to enter the spirit world.

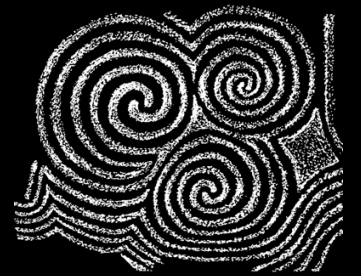
Knowth Orthostat 48 Eastern Chamber

Are the symbols the result of the artist's experience during sensory deprivation?



Newgrange K1

Did this pattern have a hypnotic purpose? Would it have a calming effect on the mind if it was looked at for prolonged periods?



© C.O'Kelly

What the experts say

What is possible, and ultimately most valuable is that we can simply look at these symbols without formulating an explanation. They are messages from fellow human beings, messages which have survived long after time has burned away the organic paraphernalia of everyday life which must have surrounded them.

*Jean McMann,
archaeologist*

The symbolism will continue to intrigue future generations, but in the meantime the important question may not so much be what it means intrinsically as what it means to each individual.

Muiris Ó Súilleabháin, archaeologist

A survey of Boyne art has shown that, however random the individual motifs may sometimes seem, each tomb appears to have had a repertoire and a style peculiar to itself.

Claire O'Kelly, archaeologist

Symbols are not the equivalent to words, and they may convey meanings words cannot express.

*Jean McMann,
archaeologist*

Megalithic art ... seem likely to have acted as a magico-religious symbolism, guarding the tombs and their contents and acting as a bond between those responsible for the monuments.

*Elizabeth Shee Twohig,
archaeologist*

By applying the art to the stones, the passage-tomb builders may have been making visually permanent part of their ideology and thus allowing it to play a significant role in ritual.

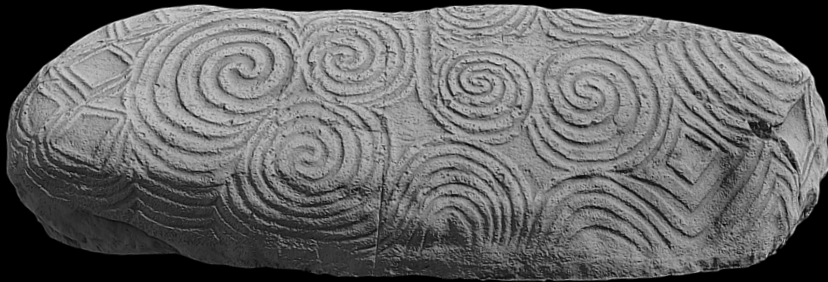
George Eogan, archaeologist



MEGALITHIC ART AT BRÚ NA BÓINNE

39 of the 97 kerbstones at Newgrange have known megalithic art. The three of the most highly decorated kerbstones are 1, 52 and 67.

**Newgrange Kerbstone 1:
The Entrance Stone**



Newgrange Kerbstone 52



Newgrange Kerbstone 67



© Discovery Programme

The Entrance Stone at Newgrange is regarded as one of the masterpieces of European Neolithic art. It is positioned at the entrance to the passage tomb and is decorated with the tri-spiral. Unique to Newgrange, this motif is found again in the back recess of the chamber. Kerbstone 1 also has a prominent groove running down its centre, aligned with the entrance, the passage beyond it and the path taken by the light during the winter solstice. We know that the stone was carved where it still stands i.e. after it was moved into position.

Kerbstone 52 is on the north-western side of the mound, diametrically opposite the entrance stone. It, too, is highly decorated, featuring even more complex motifs, and has a groove running down its centre matching the one on the entrance stone. This connects both sides of the monument along the axis of the passage and the winter-solstice sunlight.

Kerbstone 67 is located on the northern perimeter, is the third highly decorated kerbstone. Although the spiral motif is common in megalithic art, the double spiral found on this stone is special as it is rare. The art is directly illuminated at the midsummer sunrise.

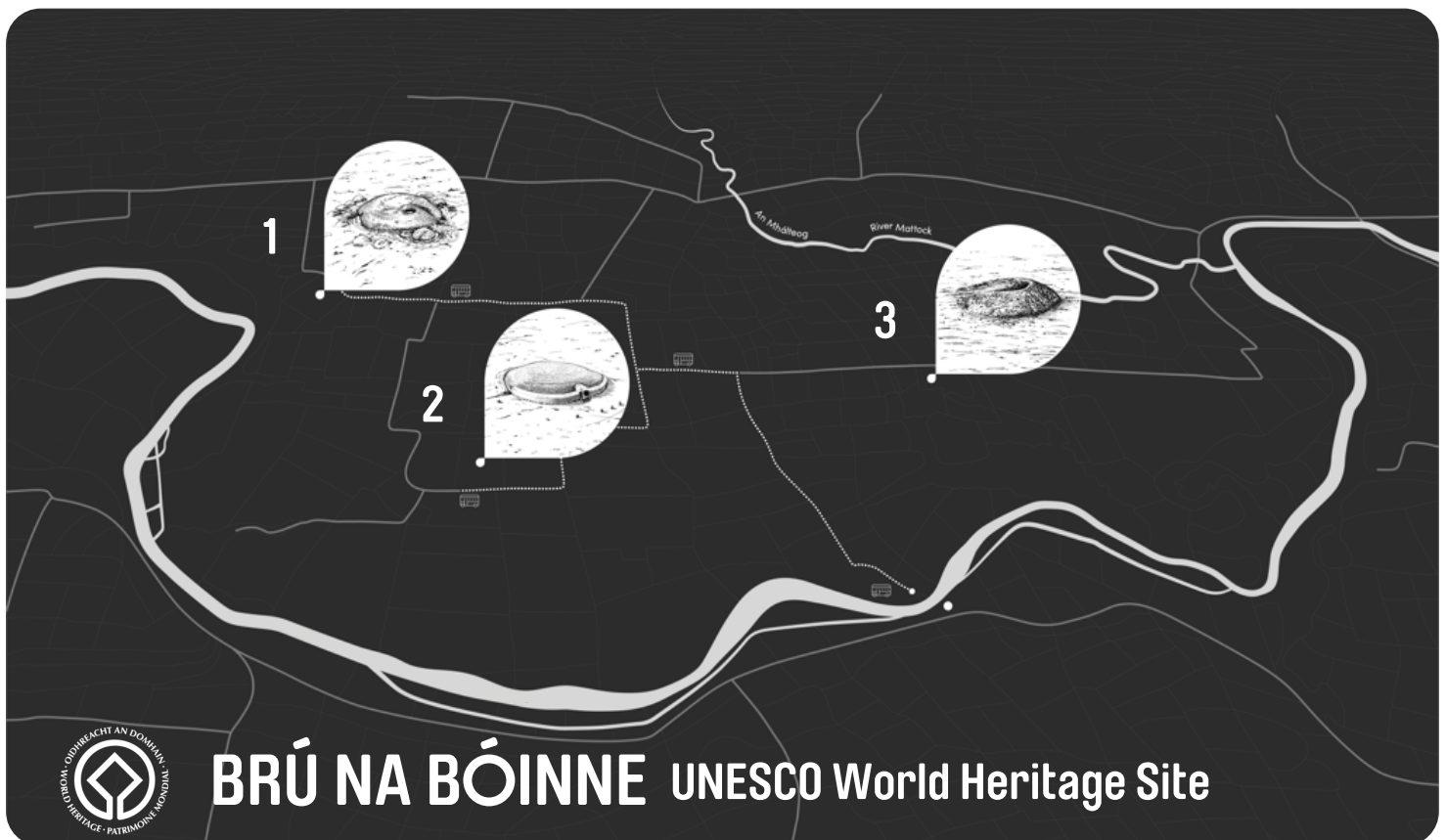
Graphics, images,
drawings & diagrams
© OPW - Brú na Bóinne
Visitor Centre unless
otherwise stated



Welcome to Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre

This work sheet is designed for Leaving Certificate History of Art Students.
The answers can be found in the Visitor Centre exhibitions.
There are also activities that can be completed in the class room.

Please print on both sides and print monochrome for the clearest images



Name the 3 large passage tombs

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

What is the name of the river?

The Exhibition: BRÚ NA BÓINNE & THE BOYNE VALLEY

What does Neolithic mean?

How did people's lives change during the Neolithic?

What happened between 3500 – 3000 BC?

When did the Battle of the Boyne take place?

The Exhibition: WORLD HERITAGE



What does UNESCO stand for?

Can you name another World Heritage Site that is not in Europe?

The Exhibition: WORLD HERITAGE

Can you name the other two Irish World Heritage Sites and what county they are in?

1.



2.



Sketch one of the World Heritage Sites mentioned in the exhibition.

The Exhibition: ARCHAEOLOGY

This archaeology area is divided up into different sections: Antiquarians, the Late 19th Century, the 1930s, the 1960s and New Discoveries.

Antiquarians

What happened in 1699?

The late 19th Century

In what year did Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth come into State care?

The 1960s

Name two things that happened at Newgrange and Knowth in the 1960s

Newgrange: _____

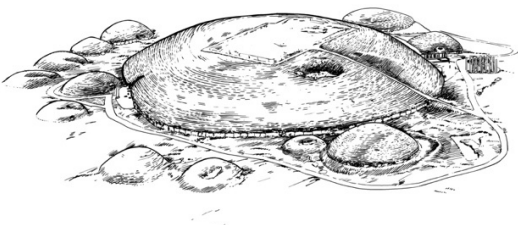
Knowth: _____

Monument and Name Link

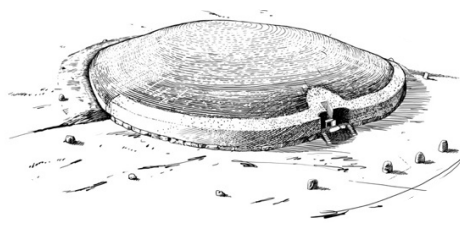
Draw a line from the name of the archaeologist or antiquarian to the monument they are linked to.

(Some may be linked to more than one!)

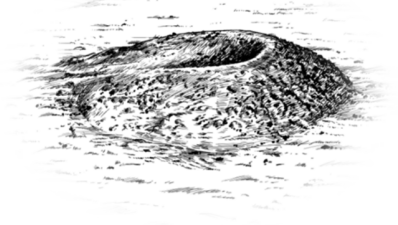
Knowth



Newgrange



Dowth



George Eogan

Claire O'Kelly

Edward Lhwyd

R.A.S Macalister

Michael J. O'Kelly

The Exhibition: PLACE

Walking through the forest experience, look at the audio-visuals.

In *Ceremonial Landscape* – Describe some of the monuments mentioned here

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Why do you think the river was important to Neolithic people?

1. _____

2. _____

In *Bend in the River* – What type of the monument is explored in detail here?

Sketch one of the monuments mentioned in either audio-visual

The Exhibition: PEOPLE & THE SEASONS

Seasons Link

Neolithic people did different activities at different times of the year. Match the season to the activity that took place then.

Spring

Built monuments and celebrated the longest day of the year

Summer

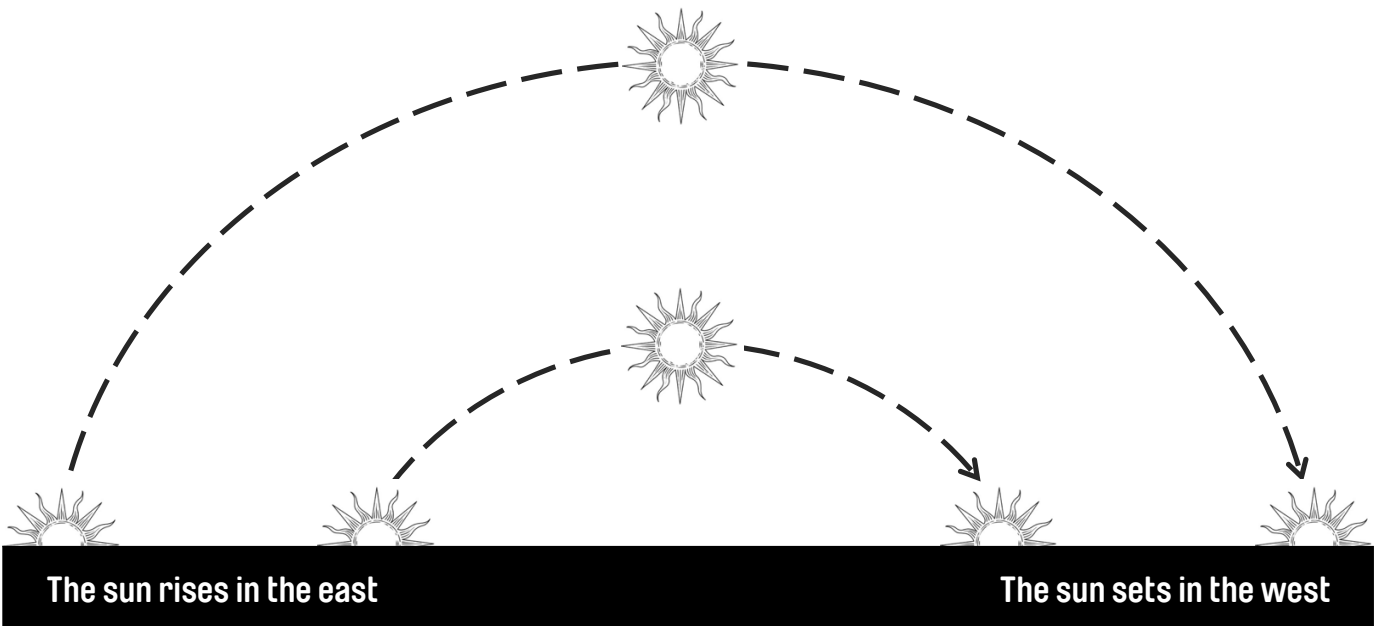
Harvested the crops

Autumn

Lived off food they had stored and celebrated the shortest day of the year

Winter

Animals gave birth to their young



The large arc represents when the days are at their longest. Which solstice is this?

The small arc represents when the days are at their shortest. Which solstice is this?

The Exhibition: BUILDING THE MONUMENTS



Draw a line from each type of stone to where it was found.

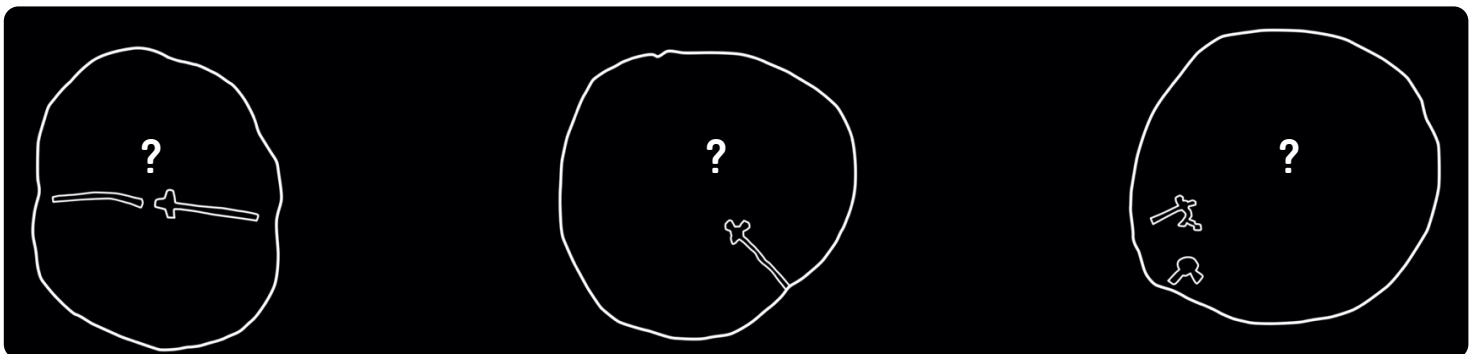
- Quartz
- Greywacke
- Granite
- Cairn Stones

Match each Great Mound to its plan

Dowth

Knowth

Newgrange



What was placed inside the chamber of a passage tomb?

1 _____

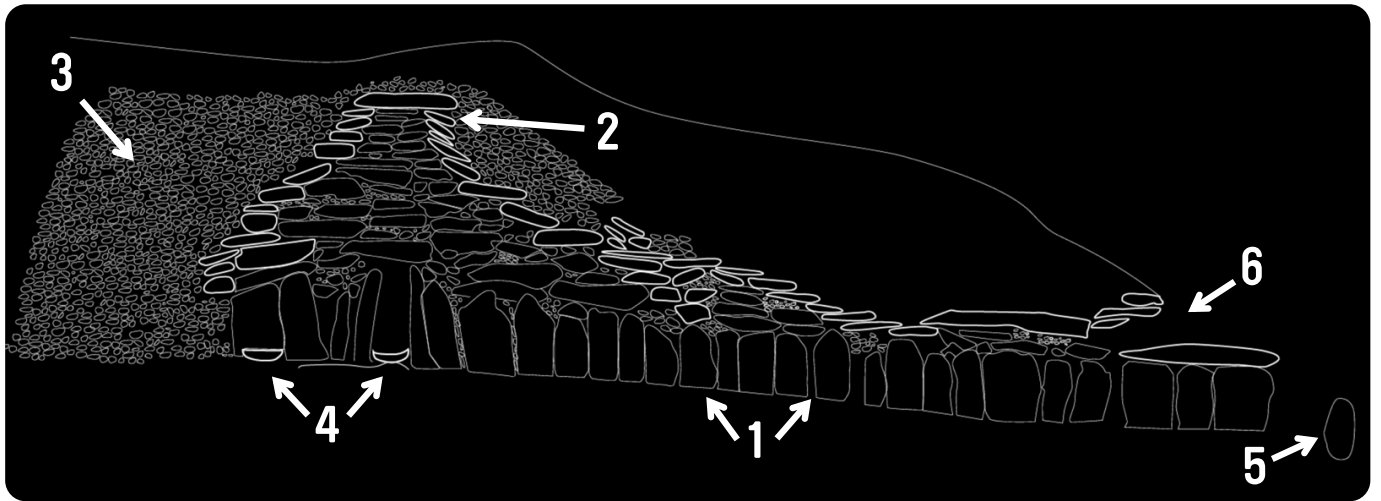
2 _____

The Exhibition: BUILDING THE MONUMENTS

Word Link

Draw a line from the word to its meaning

Orthostats	The mound of stone covering a passage tomb
Corbels	The opening above the entrance to Newgrange that allows the sun to shine through on winter solstice
Roof box	The act of burning the dead
Cremation	Objects found on an archaeological site
Kerbstones	The large stones that line a passage and chamber
Artefacts	The large stones that surround the base of a passage tomb
Cairn	The roof stones of a chamber



Which number is -

The corbelled vault _____

The cairn stones _____

The basin stones _____

The orthostats _____

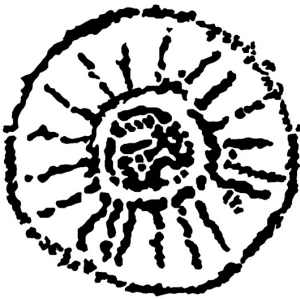
The roof box _____

The entrance stone _____

The Exhibition: Megalithic Art

What is megalithic art?

Which passage tomb do these symbols come from?



1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What do you think each of these meant to Neolithic people?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

WORK IN THE CLASS ROOM

Sketch Newgrange Kerbstone 52

© Discovery Programme



WORK IN THE CLASS ROOM

Sketch Newgrange Kerbstone 1

© Discovery Programme

