

Bryn Celli Ddu

A Calendar Made of Stone

March

May

July

September



to the ICE AGE

4000 BC

Stone Age

3000 BC

Bronze Age

2000 BC

1000 BC

← years BC

Iron

years AD →

Age

Romans in Britain

to TODAY

Bryn Celli Ddu

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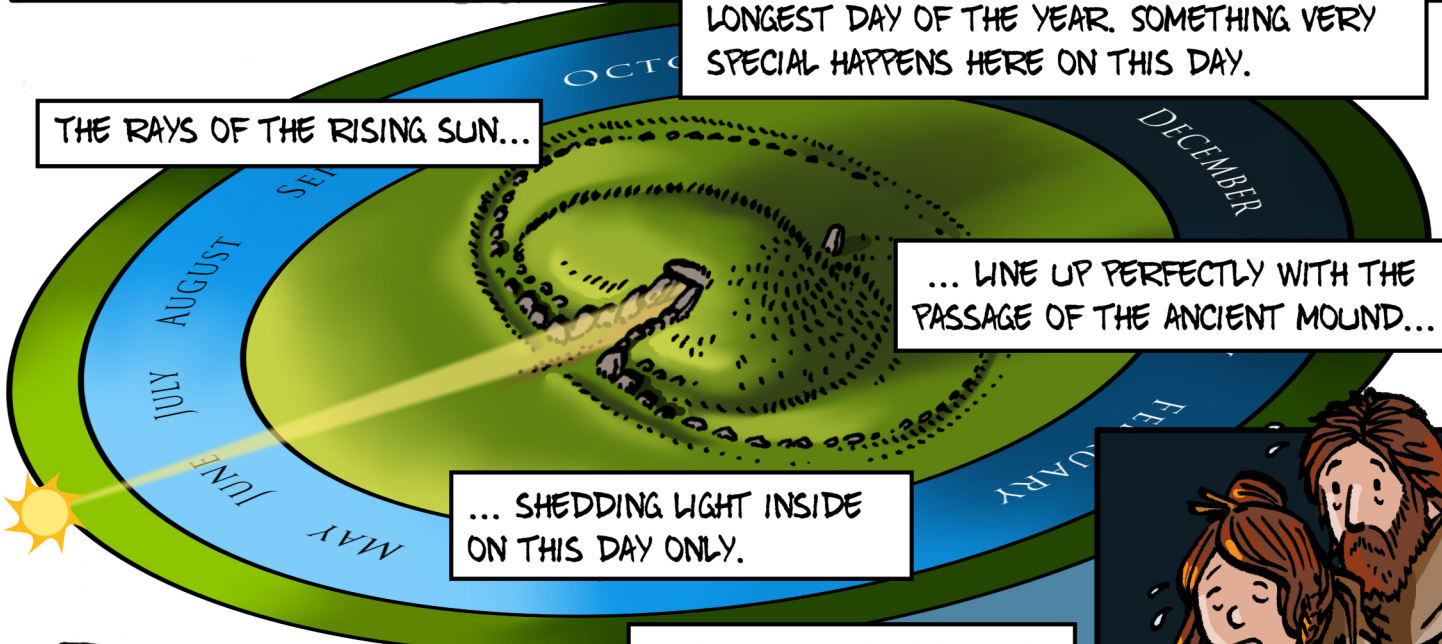
A Calendar Made
of Stone

SUNRISE...



IT'S JUNE 21 - THE "SUMMER SOLSTICE" - THE LONGEST DAY OF THE YEAR. SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL HAPPENS HERE ON THIS DAY.

THE RAYS OF THE RISING SUN...



... LINE UP PERFECTLY WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE ANCIENT MOUND...

... SHEDDING LIGHT INSIDE ON THIS DAY ONLY.



THE MOUND WAS BUILT ABOUT 5,500 YEARS AGO IN A PERIOD ARCHAEOLOGISTS CALL THE "NEOLITHIC".*

THE MOUND WAS WHERE PEOPLE IN THE NEOLITHIC BURIED THEIR DEAD.



BUT WHY DID OUR ANCESTORS BUILD THE MOUND SO THAT THE SUN'S LIGHT SHONE INSIDE THE BURIAL MOUND ON THE LONGEST DAY OF THE YEAR?



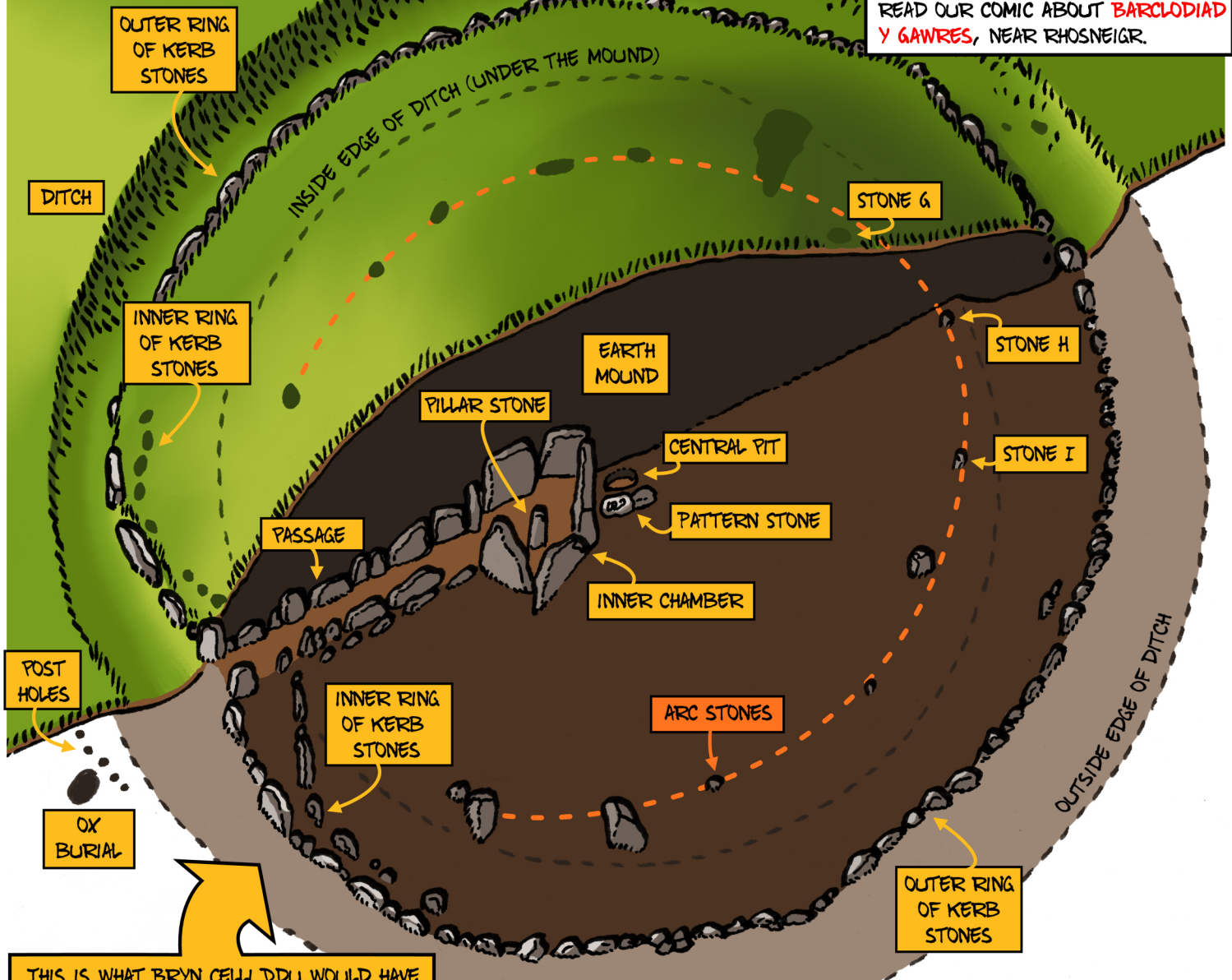
THE MOUND AT BRYN CELLI DDU WAS EXCAVATED FIRST BY FREDERICK LUKIS IN 1865, AND THEN IN MUCH GREATER DETAIL BY WILFRID HEMP IN 1925.

* SEE THE TIMELINE ON THE FRONT COVER.

THE EXCAVATIONS REVEALED CLUES THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE MOUND.

BRYN CELLI DDU IS A "PASSAGE GRAVE" - YOU REACH THE **INNER CHAMBER** BY GOING DOWN A LONG, LOW **PASSAGE**.

* FOR MORE ABOUT PASSAGE GRAVES, READ OUR COMIC ABOUT **BARCLODIAD Y GAWRES**, NEAR RHOSNEIGR.



THIS IS WHAT BRYN CELLI DDU WOULD HAVE LOOKED LIKE IN THE NEOLITHIC. THE MOUND YOU SEE TODAY ISN'T NEARLY AS BIG AS IT WOULD HAVE ORIGINALLY BEEN. WE'VE CUT AWAY PART OF THE MOUND SO YOU CAN SEE INSIDE. WE'VE ALSO TAKEN AWAY THE ROOF STONES OVER THE PASSAGE AND INNER CHAMBER SO YOU CAN SEE MORE CLEARLY.

IT HAS SOME FEATURES THAT MAKE IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PASSAGE GRAVES ON ANGLESEY.

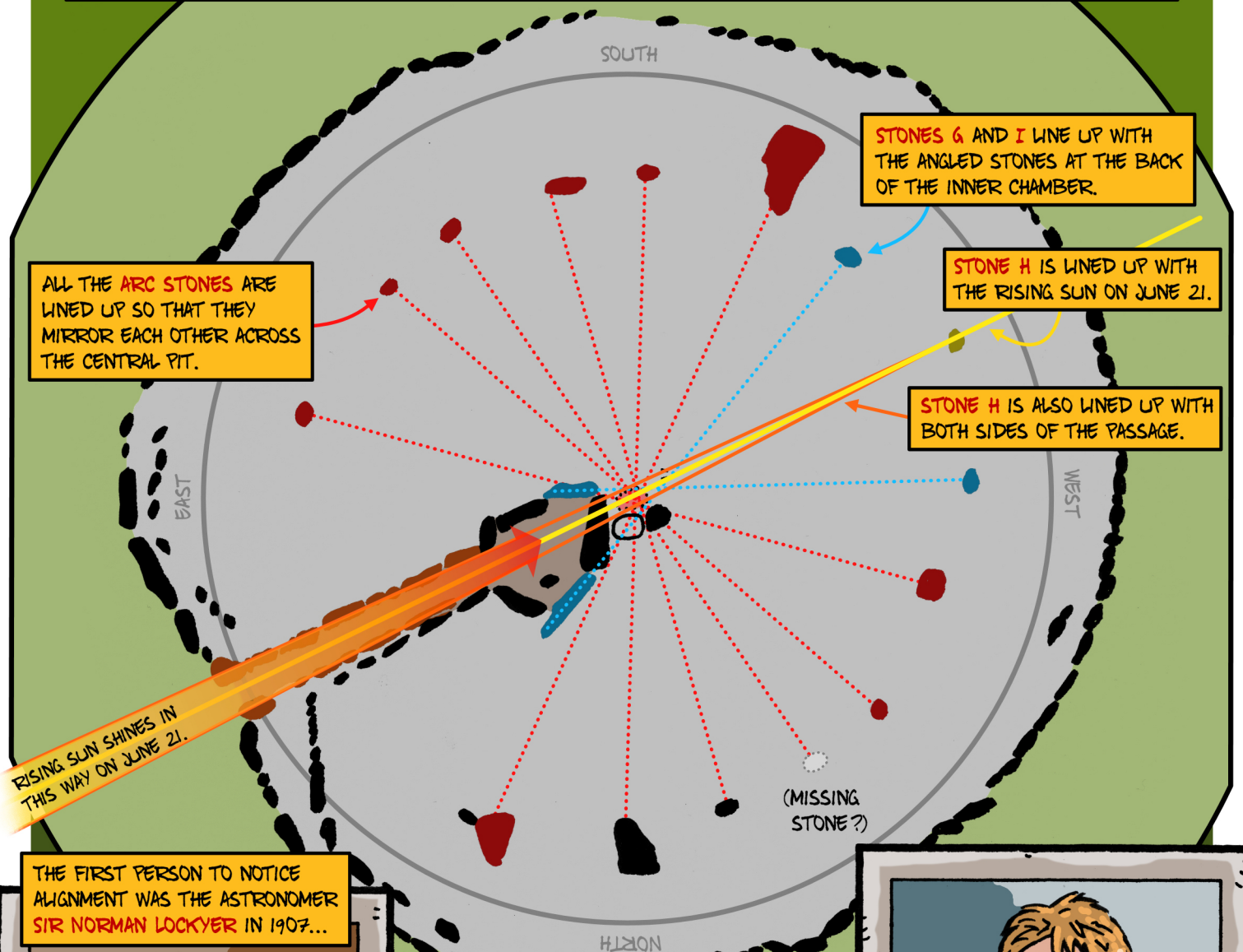
YOU CAN VISIT SOME OF THE OTHER PASSAGE GRAVES ON ANGLESEY - CHECK OUT THE MAP ON THE BACK COVER!

THE **PATTERN STONE** HAD SPIRAL AND ZIG-ZAG DECORATIONS CARVED INTO BOTH SIDES. BUT WHY WAS IT BURIED? WHO WAS MEANT TO SEE THE CARVINGS?

THE STONE IS NOW ON DISPLAY IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES IN CARDIFF TO KEEP IT SAFE. A MODERN COPY HAS BEEN SET UP ON SITE, SO YOU CAN SEE THE DECORATION.



THE MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE FEATURES IN THE MOUND CONTAIN AN IMPORTANT "ALIGNMENT" - THEY ARE MADE TO LINE UP WITH THE RISING SUN ON ONE SPECIAL DAY: THE SUMMER SOLSTICE.



THE FIRST PERSON TO NOTICE ALIGNMENT WAS THE ASTRONOMER **SIR NORMAN LOCKYER** IN 1907...



BUT ARCHAEOLOGISTS AT THE TIME DIDN'T BELIEVE HIS THEORY!

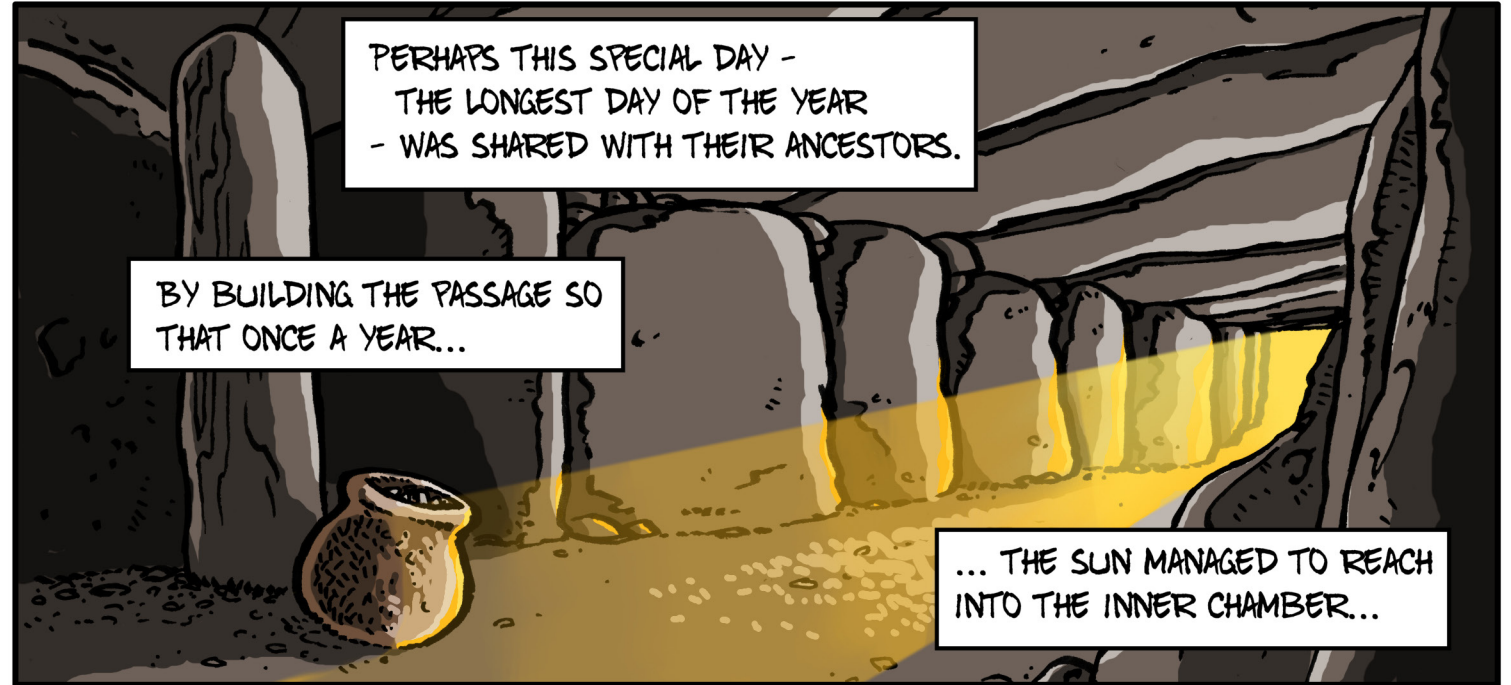
THEN, IN THE 1980'S, THE ARCHAEOLOGIST **FRANCES LYNCH** NOTICED THAT LOCKYER'S THEORY LINED UP FEATURES THAT WERE MADE BEFORE THE MOUND ITSELF WAS BUILT - LIKE THE CENTRAL PIT.



AND THEN, IN 2005, **DR. STEVE BURROW** FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES PROVED THAT LOCKYER'S SOLSTICE ALIGNMENT DID, IN FACT, EXIST.

SOMETIMES IT TAKES A LONG TIME TO PROVE THAT A THEORY IS A FACT IN ARCHAEOLOGY!


BUT WHY DID OUR NEOLITHIC ANCESTORS WANT THIS PASSAGE GRAVE TO HAVE SUCH AN ALIGNMENT? WHAT WAS IT ABOUT THE SUMMER SOLSTICE THAT WAS SPECIAL TO THEM?



PERHAPS THIS SPECIAL DAY -
THE LONGEST DAY OF THE YEAR
- WAS SHARED WITH THEIR ANCESTORS.

BY BUILDING THE PASSAGE SO
THAT ONCE A YEAR...

... THE SUN MANAGED TO REACH
INTO THE INNER CHAMBER...



PERHAPS THE PEOPLE WHO
BUILT THE MOUND BELIEVED
THEY WERE BRINGING A SPECIAL
KIND OF "LIFE" TO THE DEAD.

WAS IT A WAY OF ASKING THEM
TO HELP LOOK AFTER THE THINGS
THAT WERE STILL IMPORTANT TO
THE LIVING?



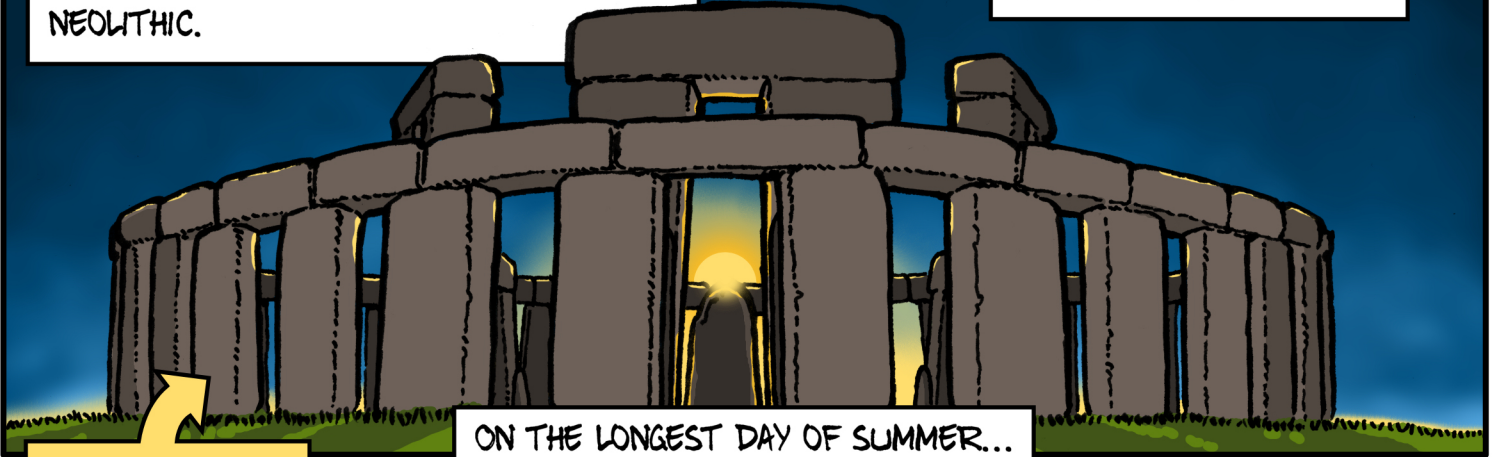
PERHAPS OTHER STONES
MADE DIFFERENT SORTS OF
CONNECTIONS TO THE ANCESTORS...

... LINKS THAT PEOPLE BELIEVED
WOULD BRING FERTILITY TO
THEIR CROPS AND ANIMALS.



THERE ARE OTHER SITES ACROSS BRITAIN WHERE SIMILAR ALIGNMENTS HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED AT MONUMENTS FROM THE NEOLITHIC.

THEY ALSO HAVE STONES OR PASSAGES WHICH LINE UP WITH THE SUN -



ON THE LONGEST DAY OF SUMMER...

STONEHENGE IN ENGLAND, WHERE THE MASSIVE UPRIGHTS OF THE STONE CIRCLE FRAME THE RISING SUN BOTH ON THE LONGEST DAY OF SUMMER - AND THE SHORTEST DAY OF WINTER.



NEWGRANGE IN IRELAND, WHERE THE SUN ON THE SHORTEST DAY OF THE YEAR SHINES RIGHT INTO THE INNER CHAMBER OF THE PASSAGE GRAVE.

... OR THE SHORTEST DAY OF WINTER.



MAYBE, HAVING A CALENDAR LIKE THE MOUND AT BRYN CELLI DDU MEANT THAT NEOLITHIC OR BRONZE AGE PEOPLE COULD JOIN IN CELEBRATIONS AT THESE DISTANT SITES - BY KNOWING WHEN IT WAS TIME TO TRAVEL.

EVEN TODAY, KNOWING WHEN THINGS ARE HAPPENING IS IMPORTANT.



AND WE STILL NEED WAYS OF KEEPING TRACK OF SPECIAL DAYS IN THE YEAR!

AT BRYN CELLI DDU, PEOPLE STILL USE THE SUMMER SOLSTICE AS A CHANCE TO SHARE WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO LIVE IN THE TIME OF OUR NEOLITHIC ANCESTORS.



TO SEE THE TOOLS THEY WOULD HAVE MADE...

ANIMAL FUR AND HIDE

EVEN TASTE THE FOOD THEY WOULD HAVE EATEN!



MAKING A FLINT AXE



FEATHERS AND TEETH



FRUITS, NUTS AND GRAINS

NEOLITHIC BREAD!

TRY OUT THE CLOTHES THEY MIGHT HAVE WORN...

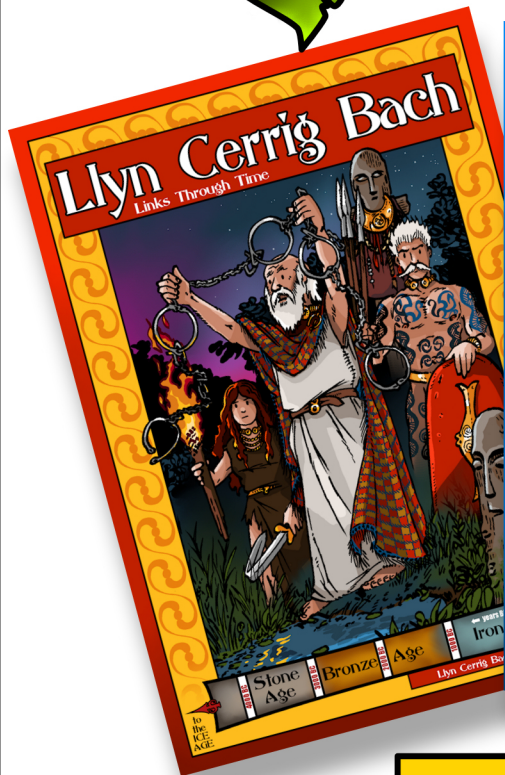
ARCHAEOLOGISTS CALL THIS "EXPERIMENTAL" ARCHAEOLOGY, AND IT'S AN IMPORTANT WAY OF FIGURING OUT HOW ORDINARY PEOPLE LIVED IN THE DISTANT PAST.



FOR US, IT'S A CHANCE TO GET A GLIMPSE OF WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE IN WALES, THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO!

THE END

FOLLOW the STORY!



THERE ARE MORE PREHISTORIC SITES TO DISCOVER ON ANGLESEY!

VISIT THE PASSAGE GRAVE AT **BARCLODIAD Y GAWRES** WITH ITS AMAZING CARVED STONES!

AND EXPLORE THE IRON AGE FIND SITE AT **LLYN CERRIG BACH**, WHERE THEY FOUND SWORDS AND SLAVE CHAINS!

PICK UP THE COMICS FOR EACH SITE AT **ORIEL YNYS MON** MUSEUM IN **LLANGFNFI**, OR AT **BEAUMARIS CASTLE**.

ORIEL YNYS MON ON THE B5111,
RHOSMEIRCH, LLANGFNFI LL77 7TQ
01248 724444
MON - FRI: 10:30AM - 5:00PM



AND FOLLOW ANGLESEY'S STORY IN THE MUSEUM GALLERIES, WHERE YOU CAN SEE NEOLITHIC POTTERY AND STONE TOOLS, BRONZE AGE WEAPONS AND EVEN REPLICA SLAVE CHAINS FROM LLYN CERRIG BACH!



AND WHY NOT CHECK OUT SOME OF THE OTHER FANTASTIC PLACES ON THE BACK COVER MAP? FIND OUT EVEN MORE ABOUT ANGLESEY'S RICH PREHISTORIC PAST: EXPLORE THE **HOLYHEAD MOUNTAIN HUT GROUP**, **CAER LEB** AND **DIN LLIGWY HUT GROUP** TO SEE WHERE IRON AGE FAMILIES LIVED, OR DROP IN ON **LLYNON MILL** TO LOOK AROUND A LIFE-SIZE IRON AGE ROUNDHOUSE!