

BEAGHMORE

STONE CIRCLES



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This educational comic book resource is part of an initiative to mark important historical sites in Mid-Ulster. Beaghmore Stone Circles are located on the edge of the Sperrins outside Cookstown with a history dating back thousands of years.

The ancient site contains stone circles, stone rows and cairns and was first discovered in the late 1930s by a farmer. The exact function of the site is not known. Some think the stone circles refer to the movement of comets in the night sky or that they have a connection to certain times of the year, linked to the rising and setting of the sun.

Beaghmore Stone Circles is a State Care Monument managed by the Department for Communities. It is free to visit and open year-round.

www.midulstercouncil.org



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council



LOTTERY FUNDED



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

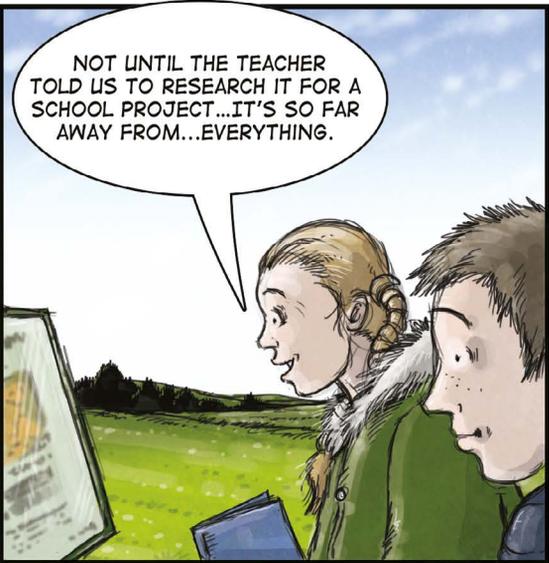
Comic developed by:



BEAGHMORE STONE CIRCLES, PRESENT DAY.



HAD YOU HEARD OF THIS PLACE BEFORE?



NOT UNTIL THE TEACHER TOLD US TO RESEARCH IT FOR A SCHOOL PROJECT...IT'S SO FAR AWAY FROM...EVERYTHING.

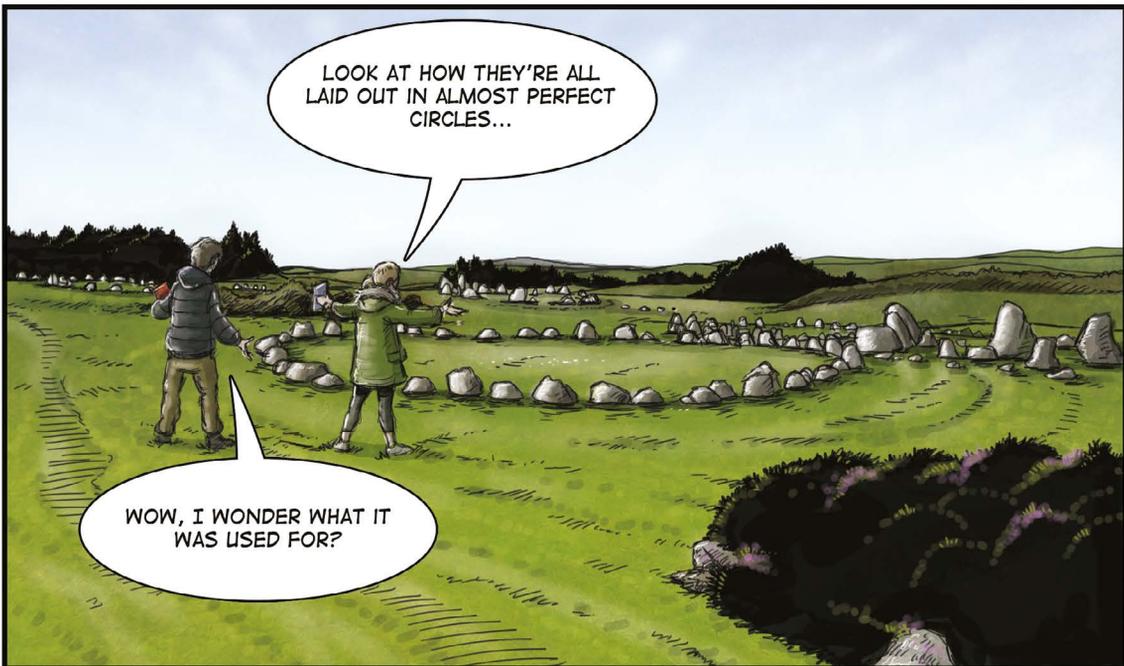


MY DAD SAID THIS PLACE IS FAMOUS FOR HAVING THE DARKEST SKY...

...MAYBE IT'S GOT SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHY THE STONES ARE HERE. LET'S GO IN AND FIND OUT MORE.



OUR TEACHER SAID THIS SITE IS THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD.



LOOK AT HOW THEY'RE ALL LAID OUT IN ALMOST PERFECT CIRCLES...

WOW, I WONDER WHAT IT WAS USED FOR?

LATE 1930S...



LOCAL MAN GEORGE BARNETT WAS CUTTING PEAT ONE DAY WHEN...

CRACK!



WHAT THE...



...HE CAME ACROSS AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY...

WHAT HAVE WE GOT HERE THEN?

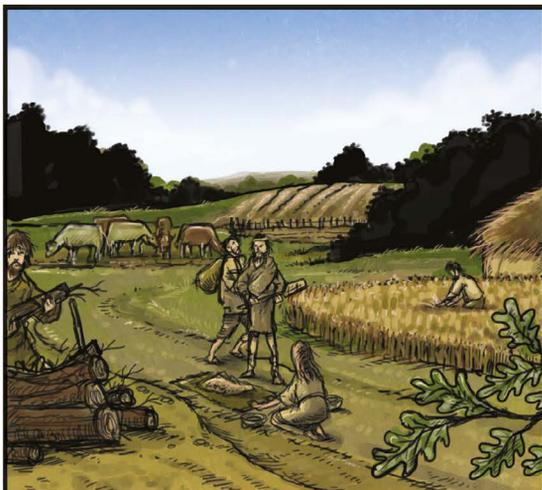


...A SERIES OF UNIQUELY PLACED STONES AND CAIRNS NOW KNOWN AS THE BEAGHMORE STONE CIRCLES.



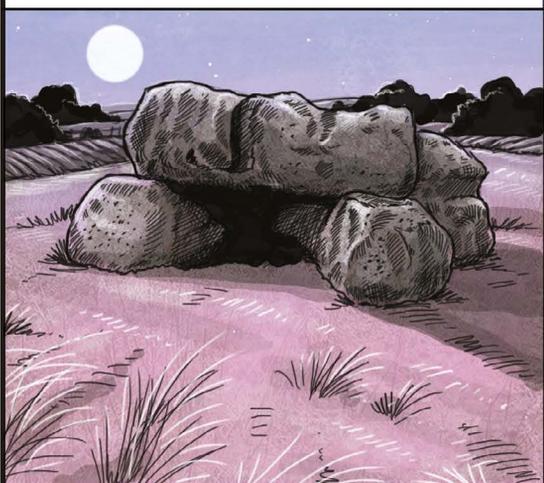
GEORGE BARNETT HAD FOUND ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE WHOLE OF IRELAND.

COMMUNITIES HAVE LIVED IN THE BEAGHMORE AREA FROM THE NEOLITHIC PERIOD - UP TO 6,000 YEARS AGO.

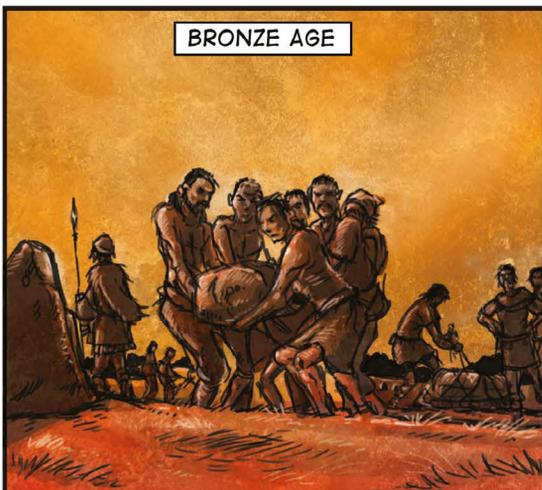


AGRICULTURE PRACTICES WERE ADVANCED AT THIS TIME AND THE LANDSCAPE BEGAN TO CHANGE AS WOODLAND WAS CUT DOWN AND LAND USED FOR CROPS.

THE SAME PEOPLE HAVE LEFT BEHIND MANY TRACES OF THEIR LIVES THAT ARE STILL VISIBLE TODAY, INCLUDING LARGE STONE TOMBS USED AS BURIAL MONUMENTS.

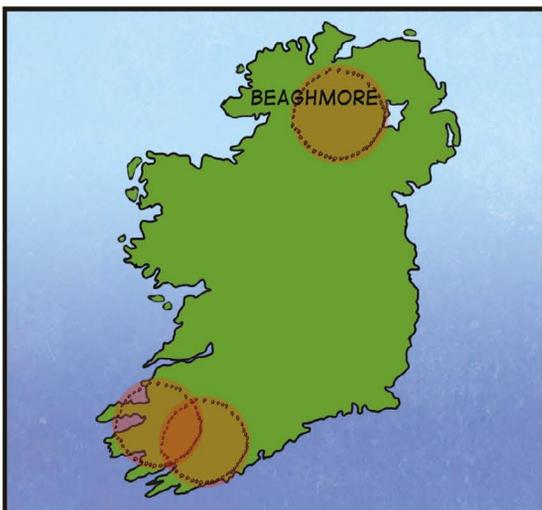
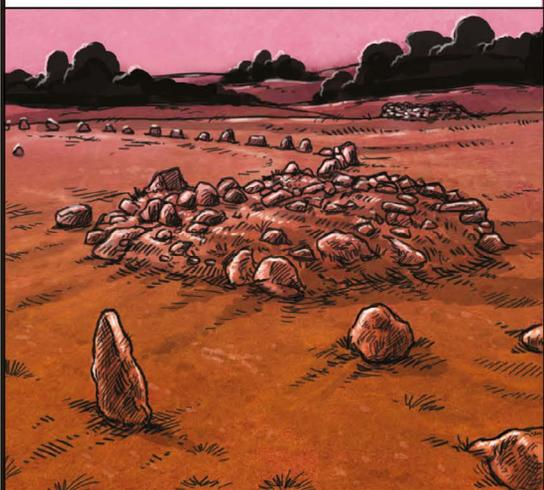


BRONZE AGE



AROUND 3,500 YEARS AGO, DIFFERENT STONE MONUMENTS WERE BUILT, SUCH AS THE STONE CIRCLES, ROWS AND CAIRNS FOUND AT BEAGHMORE.

ALTHOUGH MADE UP OF SMALL STONES, THEY ARE IMPRESSIVE MONUMENTS THAT WERE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE PEOPLE THAT BUILT THEM.



THERE ARE THREE MAJOR GROUPS OF STONE CIRCLES IN IRELAND AT CORK, KERRY AND HERE IN MID-ULSTER.

BEAGHMORE STONE CIRCLES IS ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT STONE COMPLEXES IN NORTHERN IRELAND.



ALTHOUGH PEOPLE ARE STILL UNSURE WHAT THEY WERE USED FOR...



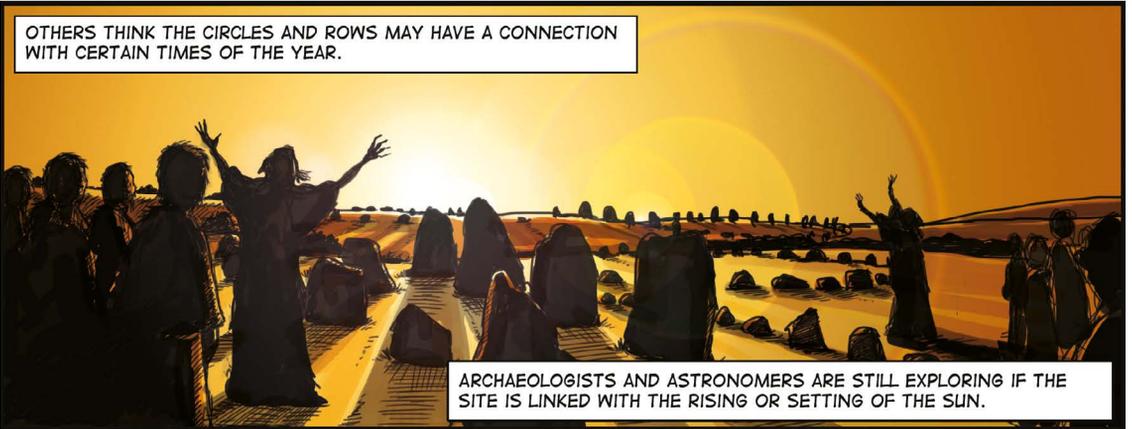
SEVEN STONE CIRCLES HAVE BEEN UNCOVERED AT THE SITE, ALONG WITH 12 CAIRNS (STACKS OF STONES) AND TEN STONE ALIGNMENTS (ROWS).



SOME THINK THE SITE COULD HAVE BEEN USED FOR RELIGIOUS OR SOCIAL GATHERINGS.

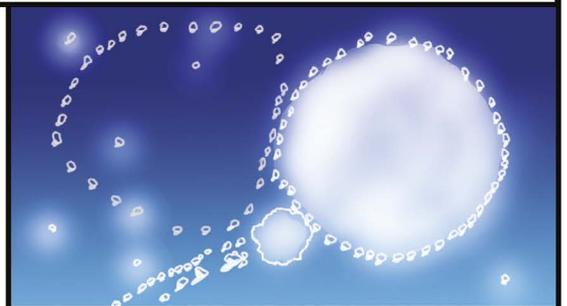
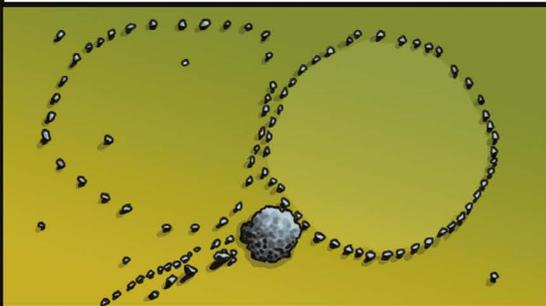
WELCOME, BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

OTHERS THINK THE CIRCLES AND ROWS MAY HAVE A CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN TIMES OF THE YEAR.



ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND ASTRONOMERS ARE STILL EXPLORING IF THE SITE IS LINKED WITH THE RISING OR SETTING OF THE SUN.

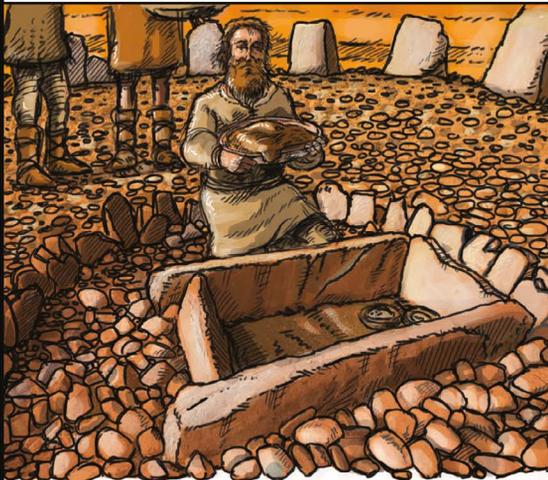
SOME ASTRONOMERS ALSO THINK THE LAYOUTS MAY REPRESENT COMETS SEEN IN THE NIGHT SKY.





STONE CAIRNS ARE BELIEVED TO BE BURIALS. LARGE STONE BOXES CALLED CISTS ARE OFTEN FOUND UNDER THE STONES.

FOUR OF THE CAIRNS AT BEAGHMORE HAVE INCLUDED CREMATED REMAINS FOUND IN A CIST.



NOT ALL OF THE CISTS CONTAIN REMAINS AND IT'S POSSIBLE THEY WERE ARRANGED FOR ANOTHER REASON.

ANOTHER CIRCLE ON THE SITE CONTAINS MORE THAN 800 SMALL STONES PLACED UPRIGHT IN THE GROUND.



OVER TIME, PEAT BEGAN TO GROW OVER THE SITE, COVERING IT FROM VIEW UNTIL TURF CUTTING BROUGHT IT TO LIGHT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

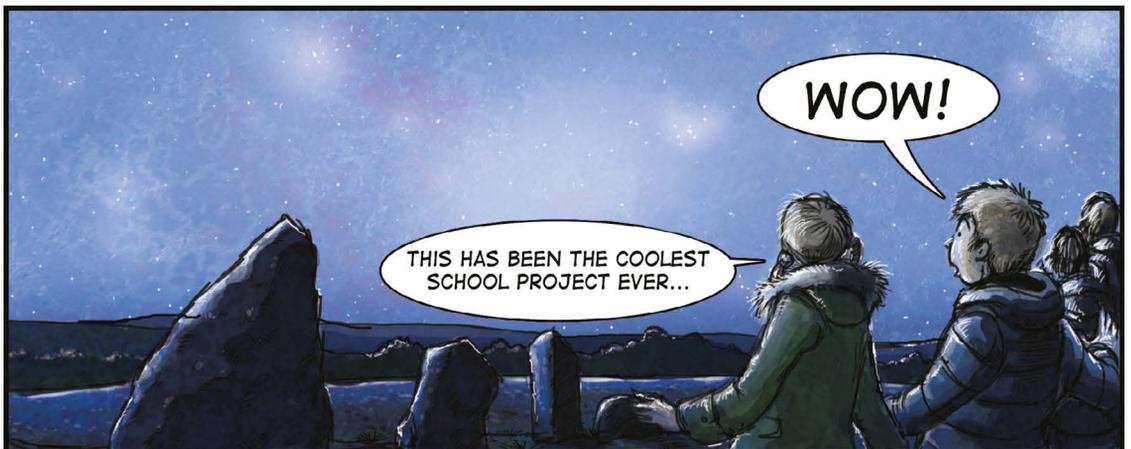


IT'S POSSIBLE THAT PARTS OF THE SITE ARE STILL COVERED BY PEAT.

WE SHOULD COME BACK WITH OUR FAMILIES LATER TO SEE IF THE SITE LIVES UP TO ITS 'DARKEST SKY' REPUTATION.

GOOD IDEA!





History of the Site

Stone circles are a common feature in parts of Ireland, including in counties Cork and Kerry, but one of the best examples is found at Beaghmore outside Cookstown.

Human activity at Beaghmore has been traced back up to 6,000 years ago, when the site would have been surrounded by trees. The area was cleared by farmers to grow crops.

A total of seven stone circles, ten stone rows and 12 cairns (small stacks of stones) have been recorded at the site since it was discovered by George Barnett in the late 1930s. One of the circles contains over 800 small stones placed upright in the ground.



What do you think the stone circles mean? Have a class discussion after you visit the site and write down some of the answers.

There are different thoughts about construction of the stone circles and stone rows, but it is

certain that a lot of time, organisation and effort went into arranging the site.

Some think the site could have been used for religious or social events, to mark the rising of the sun at the solstice, or to record the movement of the moon and sun in the sky.

Others have suggested the site was constructed to restore fertility to the area after bad weather conditions saw a bog starting to cover the ground.

Did you know...

George Barnett, who discovered the stone circles, wrote a poem describing how he thought the site was once used as an observatory. It includes the lines:

*...One stone by the circle's a day
it appears, Another convenient
makes out the leap years...*

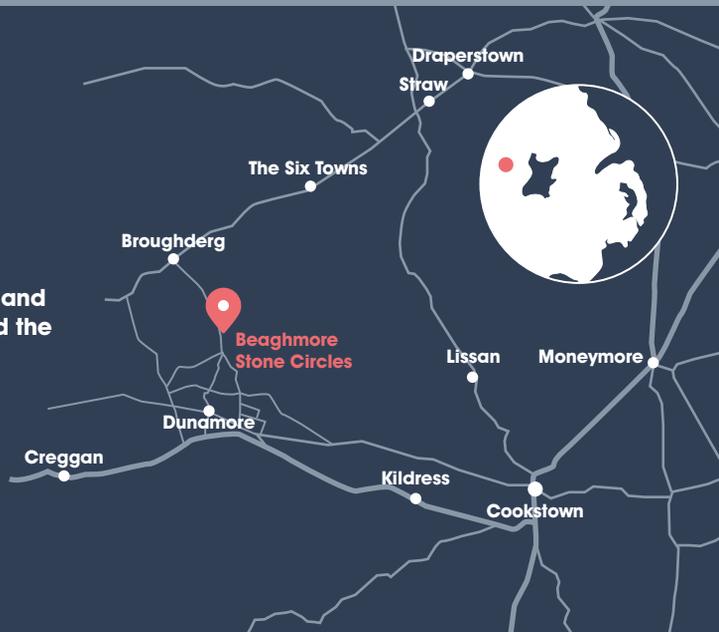
Stone cairns (a pile or stack of stones) around the site also mean the site could have been used for burials as some have been found to contain human remains.

The Beaghmore Stone Circles site is surrounded by an area of peat and it's possible that more sets of stones lie covered underneath.

Visit the site today

Beaghmore Stone Circles is open year-round. Visit the ancient site to see firsthand the precision used to arrange and build the stone circles. Car parking is available.

For further information please contact 028 8676 9949.





Record a podcast with George Barnett

Imagine you are talking to George Barnett, the man who uncovered the Beaghmore Stone Circles site. In pairs, record a short radio style podcast or interview with George about his discovery and what he thinks the site means. Use audio recording software (e.g. Audacity or Garageband) and add sound effects if you wish.

Key Stage 2 Curriculum Links

Curriculum Objectives	Mutual Understanding, Media Awareness, Cultural Understanding
Cross Curricular Skills	Communication, Using ICT
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities	Managing Information, Working With Others, Being Creative
Areas of Learning	The World Around Us, Language and Literacy



Create a poster encouraging people to visit Beaghmore

Beaghmore Stone Circles is one of the most important archaeological sites in Ireland. Design a poster encouraging people to visit the site. Draw a colourful impression of the site and think of a headline and tagline that will capture the public's attention. You may also use design software (e.g. Photoshop or GIMP) to create your poster.

Key Stage 2 Curriculum Links

Curriculum Objectives	Mutual Understanding, Media Awareness, Cultural Understanding
Cross Curricular Skills	Communication, Using ICT
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities	Managing Information, Self Management, Being Creative
Areas of Learning	The Arts, The World Around Us, Language and Literacy



Create your own animation!

Download a suite of animation assets from the Burnavon Theatre website (www.burnavon.com/education) and create an animation about Beaghmore Stone Circles.

Downloadable designs include everything you will need for your story including stones and cists and various characters such as George Barnett.

Print, cut and arrange the 2D assets to create your own stop-motion film. Work in groups in your class to make a film about how the site was uncovered and its significance.

Add special effects, record your own audio and use text to complete your animation!

For helpful hints and advice on how to create stop-motion animation, download the Nerve Centre's free **'Creating Animation in the Classroom'** iBook for step-by-step instructions.

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