

---

# Feasting Fire, Illuminating Fire, Ritual Fire:

## *A case for its use in the Late Neolithic Passage Grave Tradition in Wales*

George Nash

SLR Consulting & Department of Archaeology and Anthropology,  
University of Bristol, England

There are probably three passage graves recorded in England and Wales that date to the Late Neolithic. Two of these monuments, located in Anglesey have in their recent history been excavated and restored. Arguably some artistic license as to what they might have looked like has been applied to both. The third monument, the remains of which are located in a public park in Liverpool, was completely destroyed during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The two Anglesey monuments form part of a larger Atlantic tradition of passage grave monuments that contain megalithic art. This tradition extends from the Iberian Peninsula, to Brittany, Ireland and as far north as Scotland.

From the various excavation reports there appears to be large quantities of charcoal found within the main access areas (e.g. façade, passage and chamber). Based on the spread of charcoal, fire can be considered an important element within the use of the monument. The quantity of charcoal present at the Anglesey sites, especially within the façade areas, suggests that ritual activity including body internment probably took place at night (Nash 2007).

This paper will focus discussion on the location and use of fire within the access areas of the each of the two surviving passage grave monuments. It is clear from the archaeological excavations undertaken at the two Anglesey sites that the façade, passage and chamber areas were illuminated by fire and in the case of the façade and chamber area, fire was also used for cooking of food and possibly the cremation of the dead.

### **Overview**

An overview of the passage grave tradition in Anglesey has been extensively researched by Cooney (2000), Daniel (1950), Joussaume (1985), Lynch (1969a, 1970, 2000) and Nash (2006). Herity (1970) and later Joussaume and Cooney have each placed the two monuments into a wider context showing that an Irish Sea Province existed during the Late Neolithic. Based on their architecture, the two Anglesey passage graves

Barclodiad y Gawres and Bryn Celli Ddu possess similar traits with passage graves that stand within the Boyne Valley (Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth) and monuments that form the Loughcrew group (Co. Meath). Barclodiad y Gawres and Bryn Celli Ddu have both been extensively excavated, the former in 1953 by Terence Powell and Glyn Daniel, the latter between 1925 and 1929 by W.J. Hemp.

The passage grave tradition, initially dating to around the mid-5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC is believed to have originated in the Iberian Peninsula and moved northwards into a number of Neolithic core areas, where passage grave building was considered important. It is probable that the idea to build Barclodiad y Gawres and nearby Bryn Celli Ddu originated from the monument builders of central Ireland, through contact and exchange, with farming groups occupying the fertile soils of the Boyne Valley where the enormous passage graves of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth stand.

It is clear that there is an integral relationship between architecture and fire. The architectural traits that are incorporated into each of the monuments, including those in Ireland and within the southern Atlantic zone, may have been specifically designed in order to establish and manipulate the ambience created by fire. A third element that embraces both fire and architecture and found incorporated into a number of passage graves throughout the Atlantic zone (and the Irish Sea Province) is megalithic art. This element has been extensively catalogued by Shee-Twohig (1981) and recently discussed by Lynch 2000, Nash (2006), Nash *et al.* (2005) and Nash and Stanford (2007). Megalithic art comprises various forms of chevrons, concentric circles, cupmarks (or cupules), lines, lozenges, serpentine forms, zigzag lines. Nash (2006, 25-6) has shown that these generic forms along with other symbols found elsewhere within the passage grave tradition are possibly arranged in such way that collectively they represent a language or at least a visual concept that is both meaningful and powerful to the builders and users of the monument. Much of this art is found within the dark and hidden

recesses of the monument and is not visible to those who would have stood within the façade area. This restricted visual access has been identified at Newgrange (O'Kelly 1982), Knowth (Eogan 1986) and more recently at Barclodiad y Gawres (Nash 2006), Nash *et al.* (2006) and Nash & Stanford (2007). In terms of Neolithic burial monumentality in Wales, megalithic art is found only at the two Anglesey monuments. In Anglesey there are also some isolated stones with megalithic symbols that may have originated from now lost or destroyed monuments, e.g. Llwydiarth Esgob, Anglesey [at SH 436 844] (Darvill & Wainwright 2003; Sharkey 2004).

The third passage grave monument for discussion, the destroyed Calderstones monument in Liverpool is arguably the most ornately decorated megalithic sites in Britain (Cowell 1981). However, the original form and location are now lost. The six surviving stones, all standing within a purpose-built pagoda show evidence of a number of carving episodes. On several stones, both the inner and outer faces have been carved, probably at different times. It is probable that, as with the decoration at Barclodiad y Gawres, the art was strategically placed in order that it might be seen from different vantage points either within inner recesses of the passage or within the chamber area.

The three elements, architecture, fire and art appear to provide a sensual interplay that would have transformed a series of spaces into ambient places. The illumination and use of fire within these places is, along with the art, a ritual construct that could have manipulated actions that alas do not survive the archaeological record. It is clear that within contemporary burial and mortuary practices that the ambience created from light and sound plays an essential part of the performance and based on the fragmentary evidence at Barclodiad y Gawres and Bryn Celli Ddu similar practices were in operation (e.g. Deveraux 2001).

### Monumentality by Fire

As stated earlier, and based on the archaeological evidence, fire appears to be present within the keys areas of the monument. Nash (2007) has identified that fire would have been used to illuminate various parts of the monument including the megalithic art. The art when illuminated would have acted as markers within the monument whereby the living as well as the dead would have known the protocol when accessing the various areas of the

monument. Once in the chamber area fire would have illuminated the art within certain parts of the chamber where only the dead could (metaphysically) view it (*ibid.*).

The following discussion will look at the excavation accounts from the two Anglesey passage graves. In my view, both excavations were undertaken with integrity and despite the absence of chronometric dating techniques and the scientific apparatus available used in modern excavations, both accounts tantalisingly described the location and 'movement' of charcoal within the key areas of each monument. The presence and location of this material clearly, in my view, indicates that fire, either as a means of illumination or for feasting, played an integral role during the performance associated with the internment of the dead.

### 1. Bryn Celli Ddu

This monument, located within the parish of Llanddaniel-Fab can be considered as one of the most important Neolithic monuments in North Wales. The monument is located on a low ridge of a glacial moraine at around 33m AOD and close to the Menai Straits and has extensive views of the Snowdonia Mountains (Figure 1). Despite Bryn Celli Ddu dating to the Late Neolithic, it probably has some temporal association with nearby Bronze Age monuments such as the standing stone that is located in a field some 200m west of the monument. Also worth noting is the recent discovery of 26 cup marks on rock outcropping that lies roughly 250m north-west of Bryn Celli Ddu (Nash *et al.* 2005, 12). Another recognised trait found at Bryn Celli Ddu and recorded at a large number of passage graves is stone rubble blocking. This late phase marks the final demise and use of the monument as a place of internment (e.g. La Hougue Bie, Jersey, see Nash 1998). Hemp described the outer passage as having a carefully and elaborately stone-blocked deposit (1931, 226).

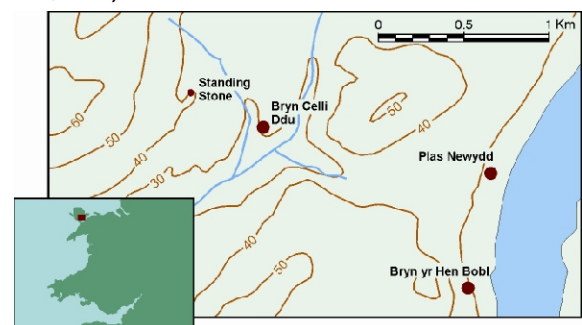


Figure 1. Landscape position of Bryn Celli Ddu (Abby George)

The present plan of the site includes a 26m diameter mound which has been reconstructed. The western section of the site has no mound and the central pit and a concrete copy of a decorated stone, known as the Pattern Stone, stands close by (Figure 2). The mound is delineated by a series of kerb stones. These stones overlie a substantial ditch that, according to Hemp (*ibid.* 237) was around c. 2.2m deep. Hemp interpreted this feature along with a ring of stones to be an earlier henge monument.

Incorporated into the mound is a small façade located within the eastern section of the site. This façade funnels westwards towards a narrow passage that extends some 8.5m towards the centre of the mound. The passage opens out into a polygonal chamber, measuring 2.5m in diameter. At some point in the historical period, the chamber roof has been supported by a large stone pillar.



Figure 2. The Pattern Stone design (from Shee-Twohig 1981)

Based on a comprehensive description of the monument in 1802 by the Reverend Skinner it appears that a second but smaller circular monument was located some 15m to the south (see Newall 1931). Some of the surviving architecture within the present monument such as the pillar and the general layout of the passage and chamber are also described by Skinner. An antiquarian engraving by A. G. Hanlon (*after* H. Longueville Jones) of the site published in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1847) shows Bryn Celli Ddu as much ruined, consisting of a confused entrance and passage and an exposed chamber (Figure 3). There appears to be little or no trace of any mound. Therefore much of the destruction had occurred sometime after Skinner's visit in 1802. The second mound and probably the part of the

mound of Bryn Celli Ddu had been used to construct a field boundary at around the time of Skinner's visit.

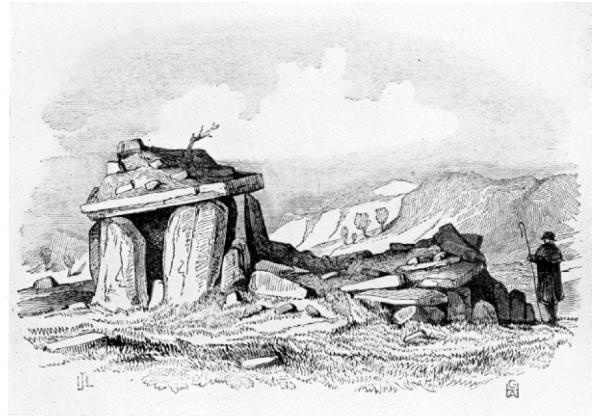


Figure 3. Drawing of Bryn Celli Ddu by A. G. Hanlon (1847)

The site was first excavated by Captain F. du Bois Lukis in 1865. In letters to his brother, the Reverend W. C. Lukis, Captain Lukis describes how he excavated the chamber area and found a small piece of lead and a flint 'instrument'. However, there is no mention of excavation methodology, nor the presence of charcoal. Later excavations by Hemp between 1925 and 1929 revealed a complex history to the site (Hemp 1931). It is this excavation report, rather than later syntheses that exposes the importance of fire within the realms of death and burial deposition.

Based on his report, Hemp appears to have undertaken a reasonable and systematic excavation, for his time, although some of his interpretation has been questioned (see above and Nash 2006, 109-10). Nevertheless, Hemp does mention a number of deposits and features that suggest likely Neolithic ritual deposition that involves the three elements architecture, art and fire.

As with Barclodiad y Gawres, this monument also possesses megalithic art and has two decorated stones, one was originally lying over a central pit, the other in the chamber. An anti-clockwise spiral approximately 13cm in diameter is carved on one of the southern chamber uprights. Although the art inside the monument is restricted to a small spiral, the plan of the passage and chamber appears to conform to other passage grave monuments, suggesting a regional blueprint. The constriction of the narrow passage and the deliberate position of the two chamber stones that demarcate the space between inner passage and chamber suggest that the visual access to the chamber would have been

impeded (Figure 4). A similar observation has been recognised for passage graves in Västergötland, southern Sweden (Tilley 1991). Although megalithic art can be considered visually important, the subtle use of architecture is also essential in providing (or not) the right visual information. Tilley recognised that the passage space was neither within the land of the living nor dead and thus labelled it liminal space (*ibid.* 68).



Figure 4. The entrance and outer passage area at Bryn Celli Ddu (Photograph: G.H.Nash)

Outside the passage and chamber areas, the other stone, known as the 'Pattern Stone' made of local schist was found lying prostrate over a possible ritual pit in the centre of the monument. The pit was originally covered by the Pattern Stone and cut into the natural gravels. According to Hemp, the base of the pit had been 'scorched and hardened by fire'. On top of this surface were fragments of charcoal, a piece of unburnt hazel wood and burnt human bone, including an ear bone (Hemp 1931, 235). The complex decoration of the 'Pattern Stone', comprised on its upper face a clockwise spiral which is linked to a meandering curvilinear pattern, referred to by Shee-Twohig as a *serpentine form* (1981, 230). This design extends to other faces of the stone. Also present on the same stone is a single cup-mark. According to Hemp, the Pattern Stone is believed to belong to an earlier henge phase (Hemp 1931, 237-41). This interpretation has been questioned by Nash (2006) who suggests that the decoration is consistent with other forms of megalithic art found elsewhere, in particular on Stone C16 at Barclodiad y Gawres (Figure 5). It could be the case that the stone, which is located a few centimetres west of the western section of the chamber, was [ritually] placed over the pit when the passage grave was constructed, maybe sealing and ending an older tradition and site.



Figure 5. Stone C16 (Photograph: Adam Stanford)

Just outside the entrance area was an arc delineated by five post-holes (all containing carbonised wood) that may have represented, according to Hemp, a wattle hurdled screen, possibly constructed of pine staves. Immediately behind (to the east) this structure was a shallow scooped-out pit containing the remains of an ox. The ox burial was considered by Hemp to be much later, probably historical in date. Also within the entrance area were two hearths. The presence of the post-holes and the two hearths suggests that some form of ritual activity was being conducted within the entrance and forecourt area, possibly a preparation ceremony where the body or the remains of the deceased were finally paraded before the ensemble, prior to internment. If the remains of the ox is contemporary with the Neolithic activity, then the burial may represent some form of offering to the dead to consume during their journey to the other world; an act widely recorded in the ethnographic record.

During the Hemp excavation, nearly all the access areas of the site were excavated and within these areas quantities of charcoal were found, thus reinforcing the notion that fire was integral to the use of the monument. Due to the previous antiquarian excavation undertaken by Lukis, some areas of the mound had been severely disturbed. However, sections of the floor within the passage area revealed a clay wall which was banked against the northern uprights. Cremated and unburnt human bone, albeit a limited assemblage was recovered from the passage area, together with human teeth. Based on Hemp's account it appears that larger quantities of human bone were present. Small fragments of bone were also found in the cracks of a small paved area (Hemp 1931, 228).

Recorded within the chamber area was burnt and unburnt human bone, limpet shells, a flint knife and charcoal. The quantity of charcoal alas is not known. Furthermore, it is not known if this charcoal formed a concentrated spread (representing a possible hearth), or was the charcoal the result of a burning torch?

Extending eastwards from the inner passage into the outer passage was a well-preserved stone blocking deposit which stratigraphically post-dates the Late Neolithic use of the monument. In amongst this deposit was cremated human bone, probably the result of floor disturbance whilst the passage was been blocked. At the eastern edge of the blocking deposit was further cremated bone. Accompanying the bone was an array of artefacts including broken pebbles, quartz and large quantity of charcoal. This charcoal formed a concentrated spread and probably represented a small fire or hearth (*ibid.* 230). Moving further east, into the façade area was further charcoal spreads representing two probable ritual hearths which were excavated underneath the later blocking material. The larger hearth was located within the central area of the façade area and was regarded, quite rightly by Hemp as 'ceremonial' (*ibid.* 231). The two façade hearths were incorporated into a paved area of flat stones that were set in clay.

In front of the entrance and within the small façade area and partially obscuring the visibility into the passage and chamber was a small mound of stones that were set in clay (standing around 0.20m in height). Incorporated into the southern side of this feature was a large quantity of burnt human bone which was lying in a small shallow pit (representing less than 50% of an adult male human skeleton).

Apart from the access area, evidence of fire occurs in one other place. When Hemp undertook the final part of his excavation in 1929, he concentrated on the ditch or circle that extended underneath the standing monument. In the base of several excavated sections of the ditch, black stained soils were uncovered suggesting that a series of fires had been ignited (*ibid.* 239). The use of these fires remains unclear.

## 2. Barclodiad y Gawres

This impressive passage grave, also referred to as Mynnedd Cnwc or Mynydd y Cnwc, lies 19m AOD

on the southern part of a small promontory headland overlooking an inlet known as Porth Tre Castell (Figure 6). The circular mound, measuring around 29m in diameter is constructed of stone rubble and peat layers, and was partially damaged by the 19<sup>th</sup> century landowner who used the rubble to construct a field boundary wall. The passage, measuring approximately 6m, leads to a cruciform passage which has a series of six uprights decorated with chevrons, lozenges, spirals and zigzag designs. These designs, which have been pecked rather than carved, are similar to decorated uprights at Bryn Celli Ddu and monuments found in the Boyne Valley of central Ireland (Lynch 1967, 1-22).

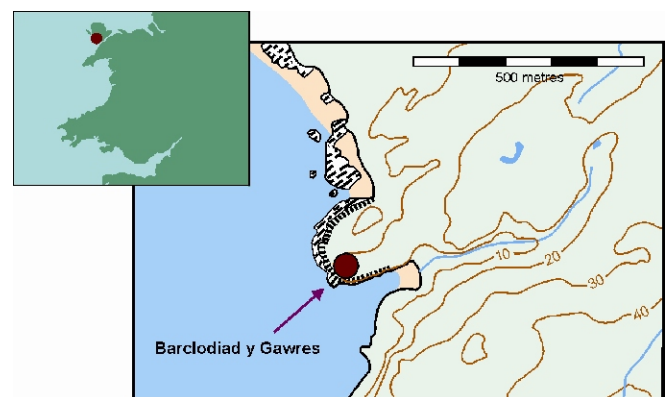


Figure 6. Landscape location of Barclodiad y Gawres (Drawn by Abby George)

This monument appears to have suffered the usual pillage associated with antiquarianism. Used as a stone quarry in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most of the contents, including archaeological deposits from the chambers, were removed. In 1869 H. Prichard published a full description of the site including a plan of the passage and part of the chamber, but made reference to the destruction of the monument. It was photographed in 1900 by J. E. Griffith and was surveyed by W. F. Grimes in the mid 1930s (Grimes 1936). In his research, Grimes concluded that the monument was a passage grave of the style 'of Newgrange and other Irish sites'. Despite its turbulent antiquarian history Barclodiad y Gawres monument is regarded as one of the most ornately decorated burial monuments in Britain.

The site was excavated between 1952 and 1953 by Terrence Powell and Glyn Daniel (1956). The megalithic art has been described by Lynch (1967, 1969a, 1970). Discussions on how this art was illuminated has been undertaken by Nash (2006, 2007) and, following the recent discovery of

megalithic art in the eastern chamber, by Nash & Stanford (2007). Following the excavation in 1953, the chamber and passage areas were encased by a concrete domed roof that plunged much of the internal architecture into darkness. The restoration programme had also assisted in recreated a similar ambience to that experienced during the Neolithic.

Prior to the recent discovery, finely pecked decoration occurs on Stones 5 (L8), 6 (C1) 8(C3), 22 (C13) and 19 (C16) [Figure 7] (Shee-Twohig 1981, 229). On Stone 5 are lozenges and vertical zigzags; Stone 6 exhibits a conjoined circular motif, lozenges and vertical zigzags; on Stones 8 and 19 are a series of spirals and a series of unrecognisable motifs. Finally, on Stone 22 is a spiral, with supporting motifs, lozenges, a horizontal chevron band and a series of vertical zigzags. This particular stone bears some resemblance to the decorated 'Pattern Stone' at Bryn Celli Ddu. All five stones have their decoration facing into the chamber. These designs, considered by many to represent ritual and symbolic power, possibly have their origins in south-western Europe or Ireland (Nash 2007, 118-20). Further pecked art was revealed in 2001, located on an upright stone that formed the northern wall of the eastern chamber (Stone C2). The original discovery made by Maggie and Keith Davidson was subsequently placed on the Internet and largely went unnoticed by the academic world. The fineness of the pecking had helped to conceal them until recently. In February 2006 a rock-art team visited the site and independently recorded the stone using a variety of techniques including time-lapse digital photography and tracing on acetate (Nash *et al.* 2005; Nash & Stanford 2007).

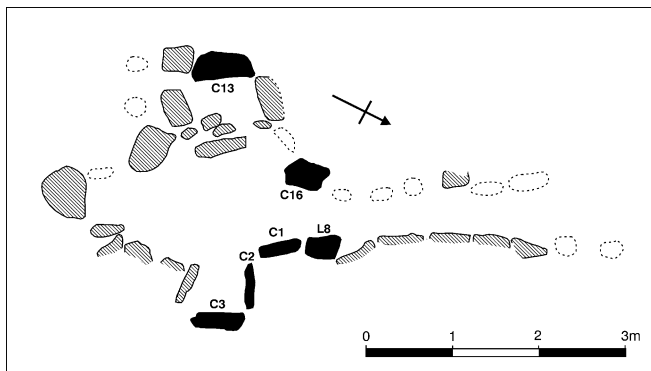


Figure 7. Plan of the passage and chamber at Barclodiad y Gawres (adapted from Shee-Twohig 1981)

The decoration on the newly discovered stone comprises a series of vertical and horizontally pecked lines that form a large chevron (Figure 8).

These lines, located on the inward face converge towards the centre of the stone and merge into a lightly pecked disc, measuring around 4cm in diameter. The chevron extends to the western edge of the stone and onto the side face. Centrally placed on this side face is the lower section of a single lozenge measuring around 22cm x 19cm. Apart from the chevron design there appears to be another phase of pecking, suggesting superimposition. The horizontal lines that construct the chevron appear to have been either extended or it has been carved over an earlier design comprising of a series of four horizontal lines. The designs therefore may be the result of a two phases of artistic endeavour and were probably executed by an individual artist or school of artists returning to the site, probably the same person or group who pecked other stones within the monument. Artistic elements on this stone have similar design traits with other decorated stones within the inner passage and chamber area and with several stones that once formed the now-destroyed passage grave near Calderstones Park in Liverpool (e.g. Stone A, Shee-Twohig fig. 261, Forde-Johnson 1956).



Figure 8. Tracing of the newly discovered megalithic art (C2) located within the eastern chamber (Drawn by Adam Stanford)

Following a detailed study of the monument in 2006 it was revealed that the original excavation team had missed this and several other stones that also had rock-art including stones within the western chamber, each of which possessed several cupmarks. A single cupmark was also recorded on the north-eastern corner of the capstone which covers the southern chamber.

Due to the post-medieval disturbance and plundering, evidence for fire within this monument

---

is limited to the chamber. The hearth, approximately 1m in diameter contained a mixture of charcoal and stone chips. Also recovered were an assemblage of shells, fish bones, and the remains of amphibians, reptiles and small mammals (see below).

Similar to its neighbour, Bryn Celli Ddu, a large stone rubble blocking deposit was discovered and this covered the [palaeo] turf-line that once formed the natural surface of the hill on which the monument now stands. Charcoal flecking was limited within the passage. This may be in part due to good house-keeping; according to Powell and Daniel the 'floor had a remarkably clean appearance' (*ibid.* 13).

The hearth, located within the chamber area, can be considered one of the most important discoveries from this excavation. This feature, measuring approximately 1m in diameter and 0.10m in thickness sat immediately over the turf floor. The thickness of the hearth suggests that it may have been used more than once. The hearth contained many large chunks of charcoal that were incorporated into a 'sticky' grey ashy soil matrix. Within the southern part of the hearth was a compressed deposit containing marine shells including limpet and oyster shell fragments. Overlying this deposit and extending over the hearth was a layer of smooth stone pebbles. This feature probably represented the final use of the hearth and maybe also the final use of the monument. A sample of the hearth was analysed by Professor R.J. Pumphrey who revealed over 200 bone fragments mainly ranging between 8 and 16mm in size. All bone was stained with a distinctive red colouring which was caused by the surrounding soil but there was little evidence of acute fire activity. Professor Pumphrey concluded that a special fire had been lit and allowed to cool, resulting in a mass of glowing embers. A 'stew' containing the meat of fish, amphibians and small mammals was then poured over the hearth. This stew may have been the remnants of a ritual feast. The hearth, although showing evidence for cooking, would have also been utilised for illumination as well. The size of the hearth suggests that a substantial fire would have illuminated the entire chamber space, including the six decorated stones that were, in my view, strategically placed to face towards the centre of the chamber (where the hearth was located). The fine pecking employed on each of the stones would have been further

exaggerated, as the fire created incised shadows across the stones. The shadows cast from the flickering flames would have made many of these designs, in particular the curvilinear and circular designs on Stones C1 and C16, move and dance. This would have added a foreboding ambient atmosphere to the chamber space.

Despite disturbance from antiquarian plundering, there was evidence for fire and cremation of human bones found in the three antechambers that radiate from the main chamber. Within the southern chamber the floor had been severely disturbed, however, within the four corners the remains of the original floor surface had survived. From this floor surface small quantities of cremated human bone and charcoal were recovered (*ibid.* 18). A similar assemblage was also recovered from the eastern chamber.

By far the most intact and least disturbed was the western chamber. This chamber was filled with later [Bronze Age] rubble blocking material. This deposit would have assisted in the preservation of the chamber floor. Spread across the chamber floor was found a layer of cremated bone representing two human males which was intermixed with charcoal and cremated sheep bone. Additionally, the charred remains of an antler pin was also found (without its head and point) (see Lynch 1969b). It is probable that similar bone and charcoal concentrations were present in other chambers and that the cremated bone from each chamber represented different strands of an extended family. The cremation of these individuals would probably been performed outside the monument, within the façade area. However, the façade area of Barclodiad y Gawres had been heavily disturbed, a result of post-medieval stone robbing. As a result of this disturbance and unlike its nearby counterpart Bryn Celli Ddu, no pits, fires, charcoal spreads or hearths were found (Powel & Daniel 1956, 24).

### **Brief Discussion**

As suggested earlier, the three elements architecture, art and fire appear to be integral with each other. Fire provides the heat, means of cooking and most importantly, illumination, whilst architecture and art provide the canvas for illumination. Based on the archaeological evidence, each of these elements is clearly defined and each has their place within the various spaces

of the monument. It is clear that in some of these spaces all three elements are fundamental. The façade would have been used for [ritual] cooking and feasting and it is probable that this activity took place within darkness hours. The curvilinear shape of the façade would have created a partly enclosed theatre whereby the audience and the participants, including the dead would have interacted. In order to reach the resting-places within the chamber, the participants and the dead would have to negotiate the long passage, sometimes crouching down in order to progress through the various sections of the passage. The archaeological evidence within the passages of both monuments suggests that fire was used in order to illuminate this area of the monument. As one progressed further into the passage the recognisable sounds and smells from the feasting would have slowly faded away and replacing it would have been the stale musty smell of decomposing flesh and complete darkness. Once inside the chamber (and based on the present height of the upright chamber stones) participants would have at Barclodiad y Gawres, carefully prepared and lit a ritual fire and as part of the ritual of internment. Once the fire lit, they ate a stew and watched the pecked images around the chamber flicker and dance as the fire reached its zenith (Figure 9). Within the antechambers at Barclodiad y Gawres there was overwhelming evidence of cremation, indicative of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age mortuary practices in Britain and Europe. Charred human remains intermixed with charcoal and sheep bone (as recorded in the western chamber at Barclodiad y Gawres) suggests that the body prior to and during the performance of cremation would have burned along with a ritual sacrifice. In the case of the two male occupants at Barclodiad y Gawres, a feast comprising of sheep would have probably accompanied the cremation.



Figure 9. The spiral stone (C3) located within the eastern chamber (Photograph: Adam Stanford)

Directly associated with fire, and witnessed at Bryn Celli Ddu was the use of clay. Deliberately laid clay floors or surfaces are present within all the access areas of the monument. Two hearths within the façade area were laid over the clay surface. It is probable that the builders of Bryn Celli Ddu knew the pyrotechnical and malleable qualities of the clay. The construction of the clay floor distinctly rejected any natural floor surfaces, as recorded within the Barclodiad y Gawres monument.

Fire and the way it was used within the passage grave tradition further reinforces the notion that complex burial and feasting practices are in operation at these and other passage grave monuments. Based on the Neolithic burial record elsewhere in Wales similar practices were being repeated suggesting that fire, too, was an integral component to the ritual and symbolism associated with burial and other activities in and around Neolithic funerary monuments.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to Professor Dragos Gheorghiu (University of Arts, Bucharest) for inviting me to submit this paper. This research is ongoing and further questions concerning the use of fire require further discussion. I would also like to Abby George for taking up her valuable time in reading through the finished product. All mistakes are, of course my responsibility.

### References

- Cooney, G. 2000. *Landscapes of Neolithic Ireland*. London: Routledge.
- Cowell, R. 1981. *The Calderstones: A prehistoric tomb in Liverpool*. Merseyside Archaeological Trust.
- Daniel, G.E. 1950. *The Prehistoric Chambered Tombs of England and Wales*, Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

- Darvill, T. & Wainwright, G. 2003. A Cup-marked Stone from Dan-y-garn, Mynachlog-Ddu, Pembrokeshire, and the Prehistoric Rock-art from Wales, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*. **69**, pp 253-264.
- Devaraux, P. 2001. *Stone Age Soundtracks, The Acoustic Archaeology of Ancient Sites*, Vega.
- Eogan, G. 1986. *Knowth and the passage-tombs of Ireland*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Forde-Johnson, J.L. 1956. The Calderstones, Liverpool, in T.G. Powell, T. & G.E. Daniel, *Barclodiad y Gawres: The excavation of a Megalithic Chambered Tomb in Anglesey*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Grimes, W.F. 193
- Hemp, W.J. 1931. The Chambered Cairn of Bryn Celli Ddu, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, **1xxx** (1931) pp 179-214.
- Herity, M. 1970. The early prehistoric period around the Irish Sea. In D. Moore (ed.) *The Irish Sea Province in Archaeology and History*. Cambrian Archaeological Association. pp 293-7.
- Joussaume, R. 1985. *Dolmens for the dead: Megalith Building throughout the World*. London: Batsford.
- Lynch, F.M. 1967, Barclodiad y Gawres: Comparative Notes on the Decorated Stones, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, **CXVI**, pp 122
- Lynch, F.M. 1969a. The Megalithic Tombs of North Wales. In T.G.E. Powell, J.X.W.P. Corcoran, F. Lynch & J.G. Scott (eds.). *Megalithic Enquiries in the West of Britain*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. pp 107-148.
- Lynch, F.M. 1969b. The Contents of Excavated Tombs in North Wales. In T.G.E. Powell, J.X.W.P. Corcoran, F. Lynch & J.G. Scott (eds.). *Megalithic Enquiries in the West of Britain*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. pp 149-174.
- Lynch, F.M., 1970, *Prehistoric Anglesey*, Anglesey Antiquarian Society, Llangefni.
- Lynch, F.M. 2000. The Later Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age. In F. Lynch, S. Aldhouse-Green and J. Davis (eds.), *Prehistoric Wales*, Stroud: Sutton, pp 79-138.
- Mazel, A., Nash, G. H. & Waddington, C. (eds.) *forthcoming. Narratives in British Prehistoric Rock-art*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Nash, G.H. 1998. Fourth interim report on the facade area of La Hougue Bie Passage Grave, Jersey. *Société Jersiaise Journal*. Vol. **27**. pt. **2**.
- Nash, G.H. 2006. *The Architecture of Death: The Chambered Monuments of Wales*. Logaston Press.
- Nash, G.H. 2007. Lighting-up the End of the Passage: The way Megalithic Art was viewed and Experienced, in D.Gheorghiu & G.H. Nash (eds.) *The Archaeology of Fire*. Budapest: Archaeologia, pp 117-152.
- Nash, G.H., Brook, C., George, A., Hudson, D., McQueen, E., Parker, C., Stanford, A., Smith, A., Swann, J. & Waite, L. 2005. Notes on newly discovered rock-art on and around Neolithic burial chambers in Wales. *Archaeology in Wales*, Vol. 45, 11-16.
- Nash, G.H. & Stanford, A. 2007. New rock-art discoveries at Barclodiad y Gawres, Anglesey, North Wales. *Adoranten*
- Newall, R.S. 1931. The Smaller Cairn at Bryn Celli Ddu. *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, **1xxx** (1930), pp 259-62.
- O'Kelly, M.J. 1982. *Newgrange: Archaeology, Art and Legend*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Powell, T.G.E. & Daniel, G.E. 1956. *Barclodiad y Gawres: The Excavation of a Megalithic Chambered Tomb in Anglesey*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Sharkey, J. 2004. *The Meeting of the Tracks: Rock Art in Ancient Wales*. Carreg Gwalch.
- Shee-Twohig, E. 1981. *Megalithic Art of Western Europe*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

---

Skinner, J. Reverend. 1802. *Ten Days Tour through the Island of Anglesey* (reprinted with introduction by T. Williams, 2004).

Tilley, C. 1991. Constructing a ritual landscape. In K. Jennbert, L. Larsson, R. Petre & B. Wyszomirska-Werbart (eds.) *Regions and Reflections* (in honour of Marta Stromberg). *Acta Archaeologica Lundensia Series 8*, No. **20**, pp 6779.