

La Rocque qui Sonne

Early Guernsey Archaeology Site

3 Prehistoric passage grave

This prehistoric passage grave, originally perhaps the largest and finest in Guernsey, now survives only as two upright slabs and a displaced capstone. The site was examined by F C Lukis in 1837. Lukis records that nine other cromlechs or graves were known in the area before destruction for their stone. There were originally 4 or 6 capstones, which were removed when the site was destroyed by the owner c AD 1800. Lukis found the tops of several rocks and 4 or 5 props lying in a curved line to the east of the surviving capstone showing that a stone kerb may have surrounded the chamber.

A circular mound may also have covered it.

The monument dates to c 3500-2000 BC.

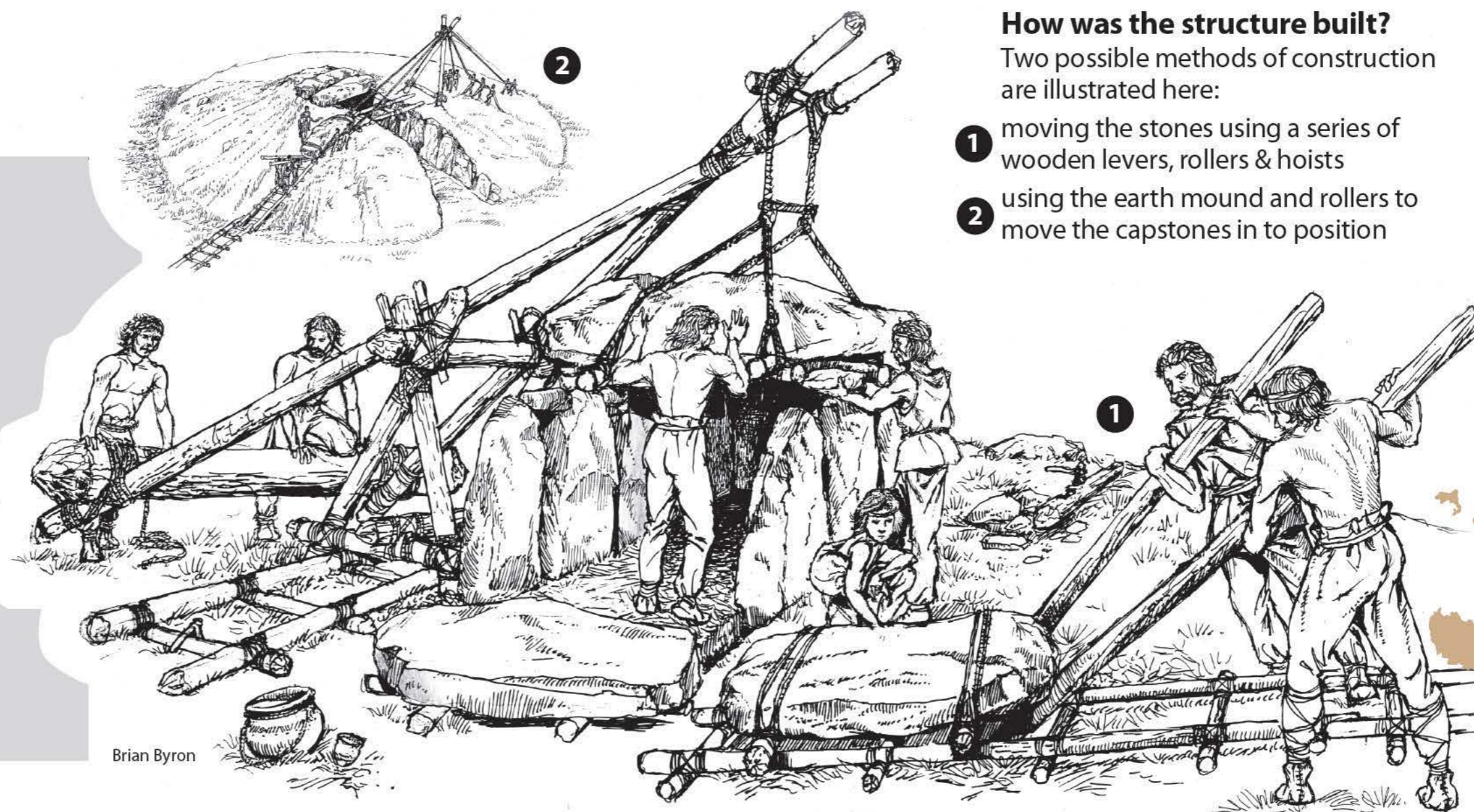
Guernsey Folklore : 'The Ringing Stones'

About two hundred years ago, Mr Jean Henri who owned the field where the passage grave stood, ordered the stones from the grave to be broken up. He wanted to use the stone to build his house at Belval. Every time the mason's hammer hit one of the stones it could be heard ringing for miles around so it was named 'La Rocque qui Sonne'. However, the day after Mr Henri's house was ready, it burnt down. Then, when he sent some of the stones to England for road building, the ship was wrecked and Mr. Henri was drowned! Did destroying the grave bring him bad luck?

How was the structure built?

Two possible methods of construction are illustrated here:

- 1 moving the stones using a series of wooden levers, rollers & hoists
- 2 using the earth mound and rollers to move the capstones in to position



A bronze arm bracelet found under the remaining capstone



Decorated jet bracelet found under the remaining capstone

These finds are on display at the Guernsey Museum & Art Gallery, Candie Gardens

Other Burial Chambers can be found in Guernsey



What is a passage grave?

In the Neolithic period (about 6000 years ago) people built monuments with large stones to put people's bodies in after they were dead. A passage or corridor built out of stone led to a wider chamber or room at the end and the stones were covered by mounds of earth. The graves were thought of as very special places and precious items such as the jet bracelet found at La Rocque qui Sonne were often placed in the graves with the bodies.

These graves were used for many thousands of years by different groups of people.



Welcome

This scheduled **Ancient Monument** is cared for by the Culture & Leisure Department. If you have any comments about it please telephone us on 01481 726518 or write to us at Guernsey Museum & Art Gallery, Candie Gardens, St Peter Port, GY1 1UG

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