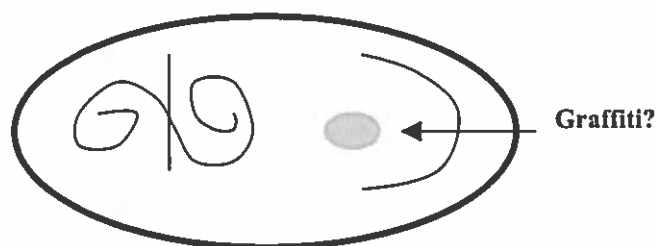


Possible rock art at Whiteabbey, Co.Antrim

On Friday 19th October an amateur palaeontologist, Mr Roger Byrne, contacted the office to report the discovery of a spiral-inscribed boulder on the coast at Whiteabbey. The report was made to Linda Canning who informed me and we arranged to visit the site with Mr Byrne that afternoon.

We arrived at 1.30pm and Mr Byrne directed us to the location, which unfortunately was inundated by very choppy seas. It was approximately 750m N of Macedon Point (grid ref. J3561 8184), reportedly 3m out from the sea wall. Mr Byrne described it as an oval sandstone block, c. 2 x 1m, with a double spiral and a dividing line at one side of the observable face, a further fainter spiral on the other side. It was partly covered by cockles and there was a suggestion of graffiti in the centre of the fainter spiral. We agreed to visit the site again the following week when the tides would be more favourable.

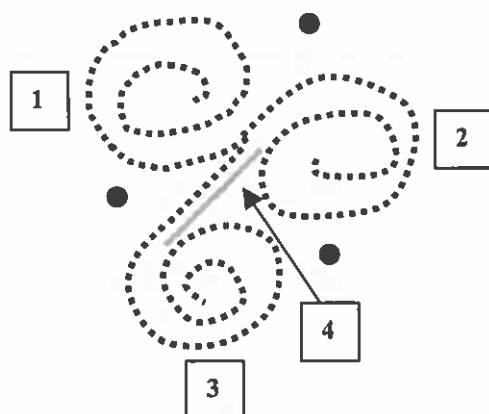


Impression of the
decoration as described
and sketched by Mr Byrne
on 19th October

(Mr Byrne has interpreted the spirals as representing the sky and is convinced that the straight line points to the rising midwinter sun.)

DECLAN P HURL

19th October 2001



Impression of the
decoration as viewed by
me on 23rd October –
see below

In a follow-up visit on the morning of 23rd October, Linda and myself were joined by Gail Pollock, and again accompanied by Mr Byrne.

The stone turned out to be an outcrop of Old Red Sandstone, 10.1m N of the corner of the coastal wall and 6.1m E of the base of the wall (grid ref. J3562 8185). There was a partially-eroded triple-spiral decoration (see above) hammered / picked out on the N side of the exposed outcrop, apparently with a blunt instrument. Spiral 1 measured 0.32x0.30m, spiral 2 measured 0.32-0.35, and spiral 3 measured 0.53x0.26m. An incised line 4 was markedly different in execution and very uneven in depth and width; it could have been scored by an anchor. Similarly the graffiti consists of a few short incised lines which could have been added at any time, and the fainter spiral postulated by Mr Byrne appears to be related to the bedding planes of the sandstone and, therefore, natural.

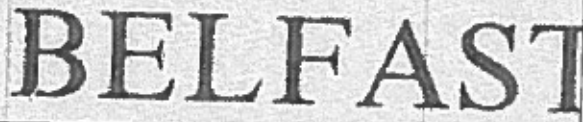
Due to time restrictions, we left after 30 minutes. I was able to conclude, however, that the type of decoration and method of execution appeared to be consistent with other examples of Neolithic megalithic art. Further examination by colleagues more familiar with such features would, none-the-less, be valuable.

If it is genuine, one must assume that it has been covered by sand until relatively recently, otherwise the artwork could hardly have survived the corrosive attention of the tides for approximately five millennia. A digital image of the decoration will be circulated shortly.

DECLAN P HURL

23rd October 2001

0 200 400 600 800 1000
yards



Centre (335575, 381863)

metres

0 10 20 30 40 50

yards

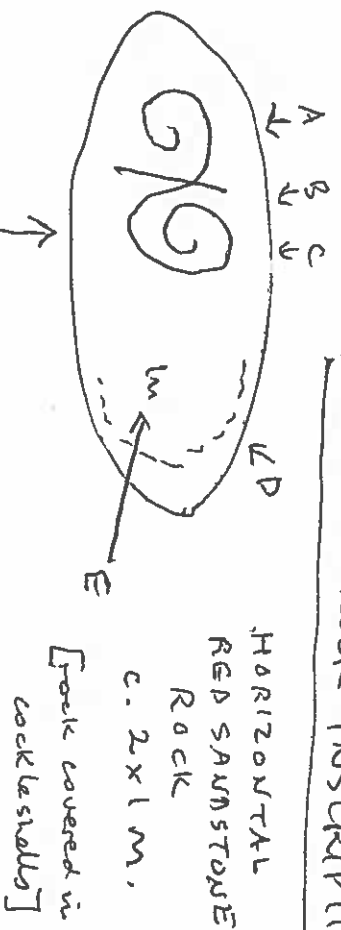


NEOLITHIC ROCK INSCRIPTION

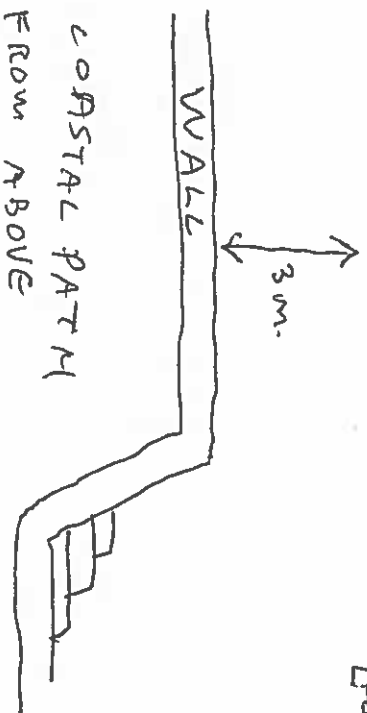
(Hagelbauer Hieroglyphs)

a.m. 08

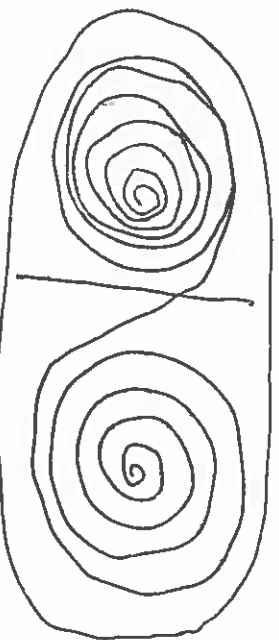
FRI 19 OCT 01.



- A. Spiral c. 30/40 cm.
- B. slit cut through spirals.
- C. Spiral c. 30/40 cm.
- D. Vague outline of large spiral.
- E. Grotto?



DIAG. I WHITE ABBEY DIAG. II NEWGRANGE



NEWGRANGE.

Comments:

- (a) When my wife first saw A. & B. she thought they were fossil/ worn traces - common enough but none elsewhere ~~there~~ here in the sandstone (TRASSIC AGE)
- (b) Nothing in or on the only slightly thing I could say about the marks - they are man made.
- (c) I have ruled out 'shield-made' - would have taken too long.
- (d) A modern hoax I also rule out - too inconspicuous.
- (e) Why am I convinced they are the real thing?

Rock inscriptions as at Knowth / Newgrange sometimes have vertical slits running through them described as pointing to entrances. These rocks being vertical unlike the Whiteabbey one.

Examining B, above, one is in no doubt whatsoever where it is pointing - at the rising midwinter sun over the Holywood hill.

The spirals represent the sky - clouds.

A hoaxer wouldn't be able to translate the meaning of the symbols.

Roger Byrne
16 CIRCULAR ROAD
50RDANSTOWN
NEWTOWN ABBEY
T37 ORF

9085 1717

Ant 57:34

Hurl, Declan

From: Hurl, Declan
Sent: 17 January 2005 14:40
To: 'Finbar McCormick'
Subject: RE: Northern IAI Contact List

Finbar

Thanks for that.

Declan

-----Original Message-----

From: Finbar McCormick [mailto:f.mccormick@qub.ac.uk]
Sent: 17 January 2005 14:27
To: 'Hurl, Declan'
Subject: RE: Northern IAI Contact List

Declan,

That is for real The Newgrange type spirals. I saw a photo of you and others measuring them. There apparently was something in the papers/news TV at the time and the person rang me up about it. It was not done as a prank but to pass the time during lunch breaks. He did not want to be named but asked me to pass the info on at the time. I thought that I had. You can say that you have it on impeccable terms from me that they are modern.

I had an AP given by the RAF. I did not know if it was in circulation - if it is the same one.

Finbar

Dr Finbar McCormick
Head of School
School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology
Queens University Belfast
BT7 1NN
Northern Ireland

Telephone 028 9027 3447
Fax 028 90 31 5779
Office 028 9027 3186
Mobile 07815 185115

-----Original Message-----

From: Hurl, Declan [mailto:declan.hurl@doeni.gov.uk]
Sent: 17 January 2005 14:09
To: Finbar McCormick
Subject: RE: Northern IAI Contact List

Finbar

Is this for real - or a wind-up?

Also, there is a wonderful AP of the Bronze Age village at Corrstown, Portrush, circulating, but nobody seems to know who took it. It wasn't ACS, who carried out the excavation, nor ourselves. Was it Queen's, by any chance?

Declan

-----Original Message-----

From: Finbar McCormick [mailto:f.mccormick@qub.ac.uk]
Sent: 19 November 2004 15:56
To: 'Hurl, Declan'
Subject: RE: Northern IAI Contact List

Declan,

I have just come across a photo of those rock inscribed spirals in Gelfast harbour and cannot remember if I gave you info for them. They were carved by Kevin Lappin of Coney Island and team during a lunch break while working at stone wall building in that area. They say too that much of the Newgrange carvings were also undertaken during lunch time.

Regards,

Finbar



ENVIRONMENT
AND HERITAGE
SERVICE

Roger Byrne
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our Ref: Ant 57:34

29 October 2001

Dear Roger

Re: rock carving at Whiteabbey

Attached is a copy of my report on the rock carving which you reported to us, as well as copies of the photographs taken on Tuesday 23 October.

The report on the carving has now been put into our Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), its reference being **Ant 57:34**. I have also sent copies of the report and photographs to a number of megalith and rock art specialists for their opinions on its authenticity, and I am endeavouring to have it examined by weathering experts to determine the age of the carvings.

I will keep you informed of their deliberations.

Yours sincerely

D P HURL









