

Solstice Greetings 2020

The ancients lived in mystery. They did not know that the axis of our planet tilts slowly back and forth creating the seasons, but they did notice that days grew shorter and then longer on a regular and predictable basis. It is this seasonal change caused by the rhythmic tipping of our planet which marks the passage of each year. In the Northern Hemisphere days get longer after the December Winter Solstice. This change reminded our ancient ancestors that it would soon be time to plant a new crop and get on with the business of the coming year. It is no coincidence that all the Northern Hemisphere's winter holidays fall around the time of the Winter Solstice, the celebration of which predates all others.

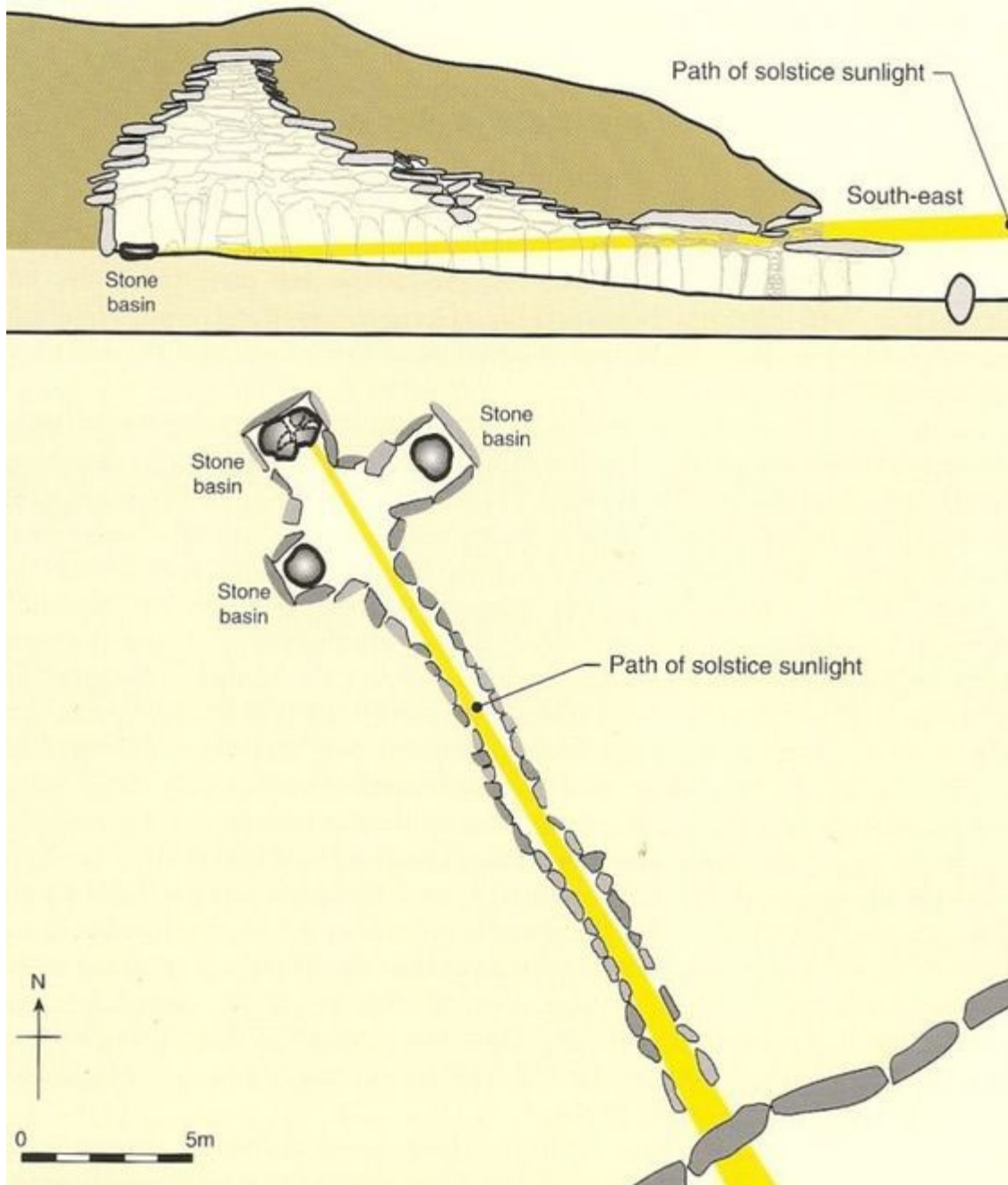
Alban Arthan

Alban Arthan means the "Light of Winter" in Welsh and it may be the oldest (over 5,000 years) continuing festival celebrated by humans. In Druidic tradition, the Winter Solstice is thought of as a time of death and rebirth when nature's powers and our very souls are renewed. In their view, the old sun dies on the longest night and the following morning an entirely new sun is born. The "New Sun" revives Earth's aura in mystical ways and gives all beings a new lease on life.

Newgrange

Newgrange is a mound complex built in Ireland around 3200BC. It is older than Stonehenge, and just as Stonehenge is associated with the Summer Solstice (Alban Hefin), Newgrange is associated with Alban Arthan (Winter Solstice). When the sun rises on Winter Solstice the long interior passage is flooded with light.





More Detail from this link, partially printed below:

https://www.newgrange.com/winter_solstice.htm



Winter Solstice sunbeam inside the Newgrange chamber

Newgrange is best known for the illumination of its passage and chamber by the rising sun at the Winter Solstice. Above the entrance to the passage of the mound there is a opening called a roof-box. On mornings around the winter solstice a beam of light penetrates the roof-box and travels up the 19m (62ft) passage and into the chamber. As the sun rises higher, the beam widens so that the whole chamber is dramatically illuminated.

Access to the chamber on the Solstice mornings is decided by a [lottery](#) that takes place at the end of September each year. All are welcome to gather outside the entrance to the Newgrange mound on each of the mornings from December 19th to December 23rd inclusive, sunrise is at 8.58am. Access via the Brú na Bóinne [Visitor Centre](#) or directly to the actual Newgrange monument.



Winter Solstice Illumination at Newgrange

Newgrange World Heritage site

Newgrange, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is a prehistoric monument dating back over 5,000 years. The passage tomb features a 19m (62ft) long passage leading to a central chamber which is adorned with megalithic art. Remarkably, the monument is constructed in such a way that sunlight penetrates its inner sanctum on the mornings around the winter solstice.

The Winter Solstice Phenomenon

The winter solstice, which occurs around December 21st each year, marks the shortest day and longest night of the year. At Newgrange, during the sunrise on the mornings around the winter solstice, a breathtaking alignment takes place. The sun's first rays pierce through a specially designed opening above the entrance called a roof-box, gradually illuminating the narrow passage. As the sun ascends, it bathes the central chamber in a warm glow, lasting for just 17 minutes.



Touching the Light : Winter Solstice Sunbeam inside Newgrange - Photo by Ken Williams

The Ingenious Design

The precision of Newgrange's construction is awe-inspiring. The builders' understanding of celestial movements is evident in the deliberate positioning of the entrance and passage. The alignment of the passage with the winter solstice sunrise speaks to a sophisticated knowledge of astronomy, as well as a deep connection to the natural rhythms of the Earth. The sheer engineering feat achieved without the aid of modern tools adds an extra layer of marvel to the site.

Spiritual Significance

The winter solstice sunrise alignment at Newgrange is more than a celestial event; it holds spiritual significance for many. The fleeting burst of sunlight symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, a theme woven into various cultures and belief systems. Visitors from all over the world gather at Newgrange to witness this ancient spectacle.