



Brú na Bóinne Co. Meath

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Brú Na Bóinne is about 8km inland from Drogheda and describes an area between the towns of Slane and Drogheda where the River Boyne meanders into a dramatic loop or bend. *Brú na Bóinne* – the palace or the mansion of the Boyne – is the name given to one of the world's most important archaeological landscapes, dominated by the spectacular prehistoric passage tombs of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth.

In recognition of the international importance of these monuments and the many other archaeological features in the area, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has designated the *Brú Na Bóinne* area a World Heritage Site. Sites selected for World Heritage listing are deemed to be of outstanding universal value to humanity and are approved on the basis of their merits as the best possible examples of cultural or natural heritage.

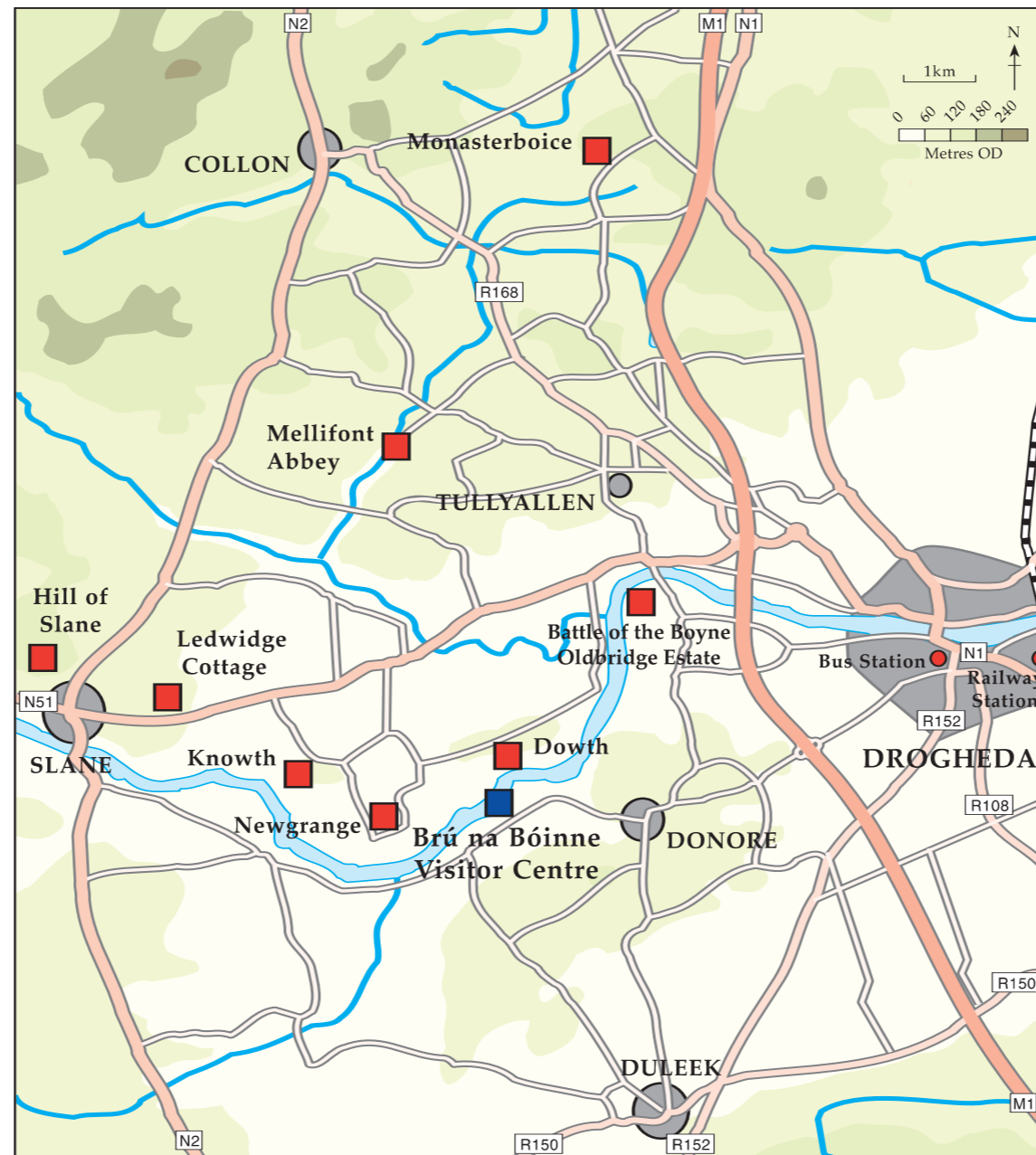


Newgrange Interior

Other Irish sites included on the World Heritage List are Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry and the Giant's Causeway Co. Antrim. World wide the list includes Stonehenge and Avebury, the Neolithic (New Stone Age) monuments of Orkney, The Pyramids of Giza and the Acropolis of Athens.

Today at *Brú Na Bóinne* the remains of about forty mounds which are the oldest surviving traces of human activity in the area can be seen. They remained the focus for activity and tradition long after their formal use as burial places ended.

The passage tombs and associated monuments are in the care of the Office of Public Works.



Opening Arrangements of Brú Na Bóinne Visitor Centre

Date	Time
November - January:	9.00 - 17.00
February - April:	9.30 - 17.30
May:	9.00 - 18.30
June - mid Sept:	9.00 - 19.00
Mid Sept - end Sept:	9.00 - 18.30
October	9.30 - 17.30

Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre and Newgrange are open all year round except for December 24th, December 25th, December 26th and December 27th. Knowth is open from Easter until the end of October.

Last admission to the Visitor Centre is 45 minutes before closing time. The shuttle bus for the last tour of the monuments leaves 1 hour 45 minutes before the closing time of the Centre.

As the number of visitors that can be accommodated at Newgrange and Knowth each day is limited, there can be no guarantee that everybody will have access to the sites. Visitors are therefore advised to come as early in the day as possible. There is no direct access to the monuments. All access is through the Visitor Centre and by guided tour only.

Please note that groups of 15 or more must be pre-booked. Requests for bookings can be faxed to: 041-9823071 or addressed to Reservations, Brú Na Bóinne, Donore, Co. Meath.

For further information contact:-
The Manager, Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre, Donore, Co. Meath.
Telephone: 041-9880300 Fax: 041-9823071



"At 8.58 hours, the first pencil of direct sunlight shone through the roof-box and along the passage to reach across the tomb chamber floor as far as the front edge of the basin stone in the end recess."

Professor M. J. O'Kelly 21st December 1969.

Knowth

The passage tomb complex at Knowth is at the western end of *Brú Na Bóinne*. The great mound of this most spectacular site is outlined by 127 massive kerbstones. Arranged around this are at least eighteen smaller or satellite tombs, at least two of which were built before the great mound. In 1967 and 1968, Professor George Eogan and his team of archaeologists discovered two tombs within the large central mound, one of the features of which is the great wealth of decoration on the structural stones. Ceremony and settlement existed at Knowth both before and long after the end of the Neolithic period.



Flint Mace Head



Stone Basin from East Tomb of Knowth

The guided tour of Knowth explains the many phases of Knowth's complicated history. It highlights tremendous examples of Neolithic art and explores possible interpretations of their meaning. There are

also standing stones and settings of exotic stones outside the entrances of the tombs. A reconstruction of a Timber Circle, which was originally built about 2,500 BC, dominates the eastern side of the site. Within the mound, a specially designed room allows visitors to see down the eastern passage. The room's main focus is a huge ditch built in the Early Christian Era. Elsewhere on the site are the surviving foundations of an Early Christian house as well as many souterrains.



West Passage of Knowth

Newgrange

Newgrange, the best known Irish passage tomb, is surrounded by a kerb of 97 stones, the most impressive of which is the highly decorated Entrance Stone. The mound covers a single tomb consisting of a long passage and a cross-shaped chamber. There are the remains of two smaller tombs immediately to the west of Newgrange and at least one and probably two to the east.



Aerial View of Newgrange

Newgrange was excavated between 1962 and 1975 by Professor M. J. O'Kelly who discovered the Roof Box through which the mid-winter sun penetrates into the chamber. Based on archaeological evidence, he also designed the reconstruction of the white quartz façade.



Newgrange Entrance Stone

The guided tour of Newgrange orientates visitors within the ancient landscape. Dowth and some of the smaller mounds are pointed out as well as the course of the River Boyne. Before going inside the 5000-year-old passage and chamber, the significance of the famous Entrance Stone as well as the Roof Box are described. Inside the chamber, the winter solstice phenomenon is explained as well as the burial ritual.

Dowth

Dowth is the least well known of the three great tombs of *Brú Na Bóinne* although it compares in size with Knowth and Newgrange. The mound is surrounded by a kerb of 115 stones and has two tombs facing westwards. The smaller south tomb has a short passage and a circular chamber with a recess; the north tomb is cruciform in plan containing a large stone basin. There are smaller satellite tombs to the east and south-west of the large mound.



The Basin Stone in Dowth North

The large crater in the centre of the mound is the result of excavations in the 1840's. There has also been quarrying of the western side. There are few surviving finds from this work but it is known that quantities of human and animal bone were found in the chambers. Like Knowth, Dowth appears to have been a focus of activity in the first millennium AD. One of the passages connects with an Early Christian souterrain or underground passage. Visitors to Dowth cannot enter the chambers although they are free to walk around the site.



The Mound of Dowth

The Visitor Centre



Full Scale Reconstruction of Neolithic House

Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre, situated on the south side of the River Boyne, overlooking the core of the archaeological landscape, was opened in 1997. It contains exhibitions that describe the society that created the Neolithic tombs, their homes, dress, food, tools and weapons. Great emphasis is placed throughout the exhibition on the building of the monuments; why they were built; how they were used; where the building stones were found and how these were moved to the site. One complete room is dedicated to megalithic art. The audio-visual display deals primarily with the solar alignments in the Boyne Valley. The extensive exhibition also contains a partial full-size replica of the chamber at Newgrange as well as a replica of one of the smaller sites at Knowth.

The Centre provides other facilities such as tourist information, tea room, toilets, picnic areas and parking. The Visitor Centre is the starting point for all visits to Newgrange and Knowth and a shuttle bus service runs to these monuments from the bus stop situated 300m from the Centre on the north side of the River Boyne.



Brú Na Bóinne Visitor Centre

You can help

- Please respect the Monuments and follow the instruction of *Brú Na Bóinne* staff.
- Please arrive at the bus stop at your allotted time.
- Please place your litter in bins provided.
- Please don't enter private land.
- Remember that both Newgrange and Knowth are outdoor sites and that there is no shelter. Wear appropriate clothing and bring umbrellas.
- Ask staff on duty for any information or help you require.