

a new two-part series on RTÉ Television

secrets of the stones

decoding ireland's lost past

of the stones

secrets
of the stones

SECRETS OF THE STONES

Re-examining, re-defining and ultimately re-building Ireland's most iconic ancient historical sites, *Secrets of the Stones* is a new two-part series that will change the way we view our island's past.

Our team of archaeologists, historians and forensic scientists have separated myth from truth to find out the secrets that lie beneath some of Ireland's most ancient buildings. Using innovative, state of the art, feature-film technology, graphic designers have visually interpreted new findings on screen, bringing to life six of the country's most historic sites. This type of technology and graphic design has never been seen on Irish television before.

Drawing on the expertise of many disciplines – from both commercial and state agencies – *Secrets of the Stones* recreates, as never before, the reality of our iconic buildings and sites.

Featuring new research, *Secrets of the Stones* completes a picture of ancient Irish life, in all its complexities, and shows how it was lived at each site in our chosen historical time frame.



Log on now to use the
SECRETS OF THE STONES

website

at www.rte.ie/tv/secretofthestones



SYNOPSIS

Programme One | April 13 | Easter Monday 6.30pm

RTÉ One

Programme Two | May 4 | May Bank Holiday 6.30pm

RTÉ One



Ireland is unique. Isolated on the fringe of the Atlantic it was the last place in Europe to be inhabited. Yet with 150,000 ancient monuments, it holds an unprecedented record of its prehistoric past – a record that has been largely obliterated elsewhere in Europe. Now, cutting edge science is slowly peeling away layers of the secrets lost in time and rewriting Ireland's ancient story. The truth about our distant past is finally emerging.

There are gaps in our history that have never been explained. Can extraordinary new discoveries shine light on Ireland's dark ages and finally give us some answers?

The questions themselves are remarkable: were we almost wiped out 4000 years ago in a climate change event? Why did Ireland, unlike Europe, become Christian so quickly and change religion so peacefully? Have we discovered remains of a new structure on the hill of Tara so vast that it rivals Croke Park in its footprint size? Are the religious symbols carved on the great mounds Knowth and Dowth proof that Ireland was at the centre of a great ancient European religion? By answering these questions we will hopefully help redefine our views of Ireland's ancient societies, reshaping our knowledge of the past.

In this new two-part series, Irish scientists and archaeologists are now challenging the accepted story, and unravelling the enigma of Ireland's most iconic historical sites. Consisting of two one-hour specials, *Secrets of the Stones* concentrates on telling the stories of a handful of key historical sites. Climate change, so much in the news today, was very much then as well. The series reveals how important natural climate change was in our history, and how it can now be used to explain and answer some intriguing questions about how we changed as a society through the ages.

Using feature-film technology and high-end computer graphics to unlock the secrets of the past, these programmes bring six of our key sites to life as has never been seen before. Charting their interconnections, *Secrets of the Stones* looks at these iconic landmarks together as part of a wider cultural landscape.

A major RTE book will accompany this two-part series and will be available to tie-in with the broadcast. RTE will also be distributing two free copies of this book to all second level schools in Ireland.

The series was produced by RTÉ Cork.



Chief Historical Consultant | Dr. Peter Harbison is honorary academic editor of the Royal Irish Academy and Professor of Archaeology at the Royal Hibernian Academy. He studied archaeology at UCD and the University of Margburg and was editor of *Ireland of the Welcomes* for almost thirty years. His more significant publications include; *Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland*, *The High Crosses of Ireland*, and *Pre-Christian Ireland*. He has had published numerous monographs and academic papers and has lectured in Europe and America on aspects of Irish art and archaeology. He is one of Ireland's most respected and erudite academics, yet communicates enthusiasm, wit and charm across a wide range of subjects.

CONTRIBUTORS

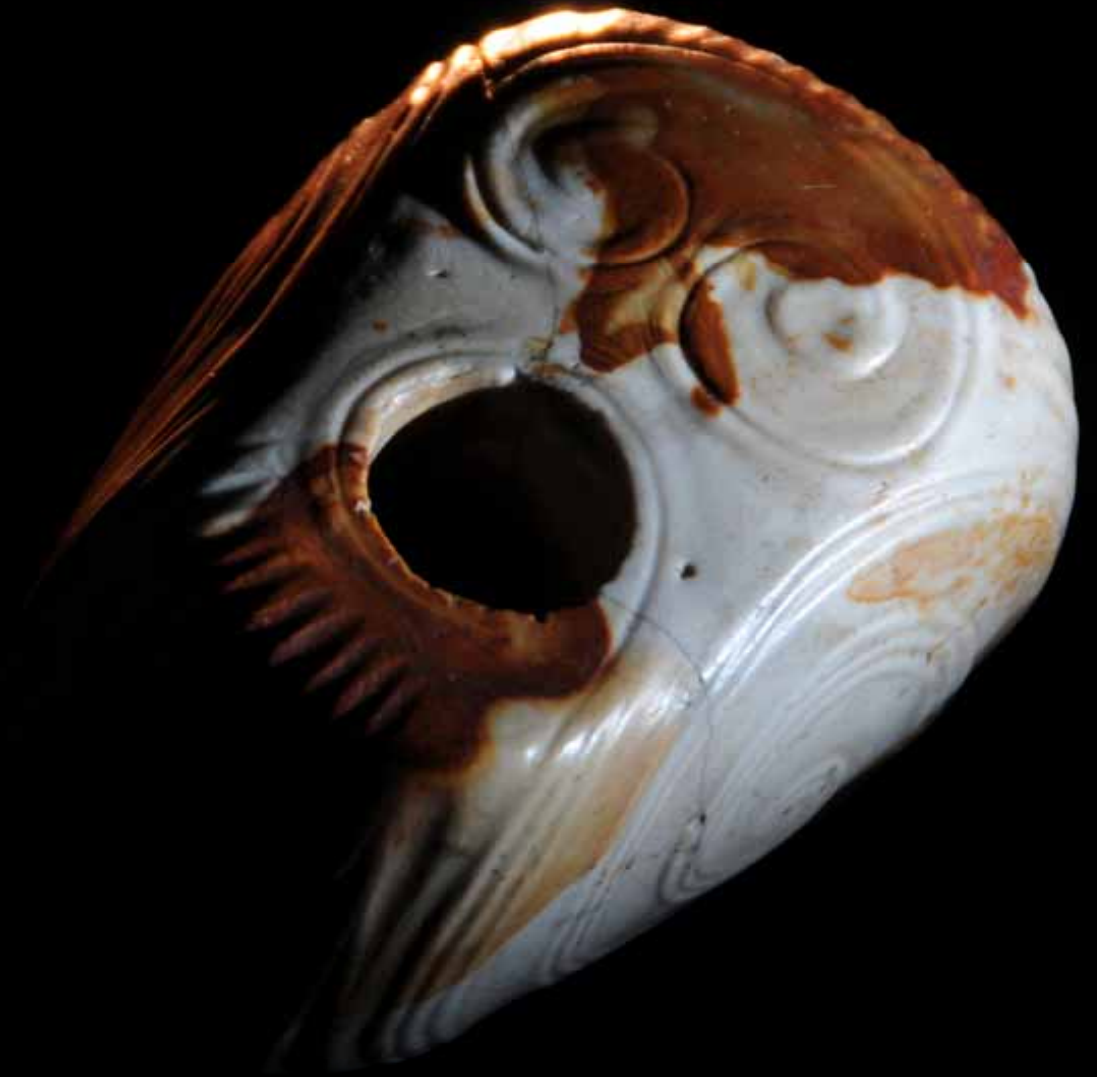
Consultant | Rob Vance holds an MA in Freudian psychoanalysis, but has worked as a photographer since 1978. He has written and photographed several books on Irish history and wrote and presented RTE's *Secret Sights* history series. He was Heinrich Boll writer in residence on Achill Island in 2007 and is currently writing his first novel. RTE's *Secrets of the Stones* is his sixth book.

Joe Fenwick
Patrick McCafferty
Richard Warner
Rob Vance
Peter Harbison
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George Eogan
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John Sheehan
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timeline

at www.rte.ie/tv/secrestofthestones



- ✦ Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government
- ✦ The Office of Public Works
- ✦ National Museum of Ireland
- ✦ Royal Irish Academy
- ✦ Lidar Information courtesy of Anthony Corns & Robert Shaw, Discovery Programme Ireland.
- ✦ Geophysics courtesy of Discovery Programme & NUI Galway
- ✦ Tara Archive Photos courtesy of UCD
- ✦ Knowth Archive Photo's courtesy of Professor George Eogan & UCD
- ✦ Newgrange Archive Photo's courtesy of UCC
- ✦ Mike Holloway, Astronomy Ireland & Armagh Observatory
- ✦ Pavel Spurny, Astronomical Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences, SOHO (ESA & NASA)
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- ✦ Neil Kearney, Trinity College Dublin
- ✦ Bill MacKinnion
- ✦ Jim Donnellan
- ✦ John Sherlock
- ✦ Archaeological Development Service, Kells.
- ✦ Cairn de Gavrinis, Propriété du conseil général du Morbihan, France
- ✦ Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland
- ✦ TRIARC, Trinity Irish Art Research Centre
- ✦ Moore Institute and Foundations of Irish Culture
- ✦ Commissioners of Irish Lights
- ✦ The Europe Hotel and Resort
- ✦ University College Cork
- ✦ Trinity College Dublin
- ✦ Pat and Mary Moriarty
- ✦ David Little
- ✦ Noel McCloskey
- ✦ Space images courtesy of Irish Astrophotography
- ✦ 3D scans of Durrow High Cross, courtesy of Offaly County Council, The Heritage Council and Arc Tron 3D
- ✦ Skellig Michael Archive courtesy of Crossing The Line Films and the OPW
- ✦ Association Renaissance de l'Abbaye de Clairvaux
- ✦ Centre for Ice and Climate, Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen
- ✦ Fr Tom Breen and Fr Celcus Tierney, Holy Cross Abbey
- ✦ Fr Richard Purcell, Roscrea Cistercian Abbey

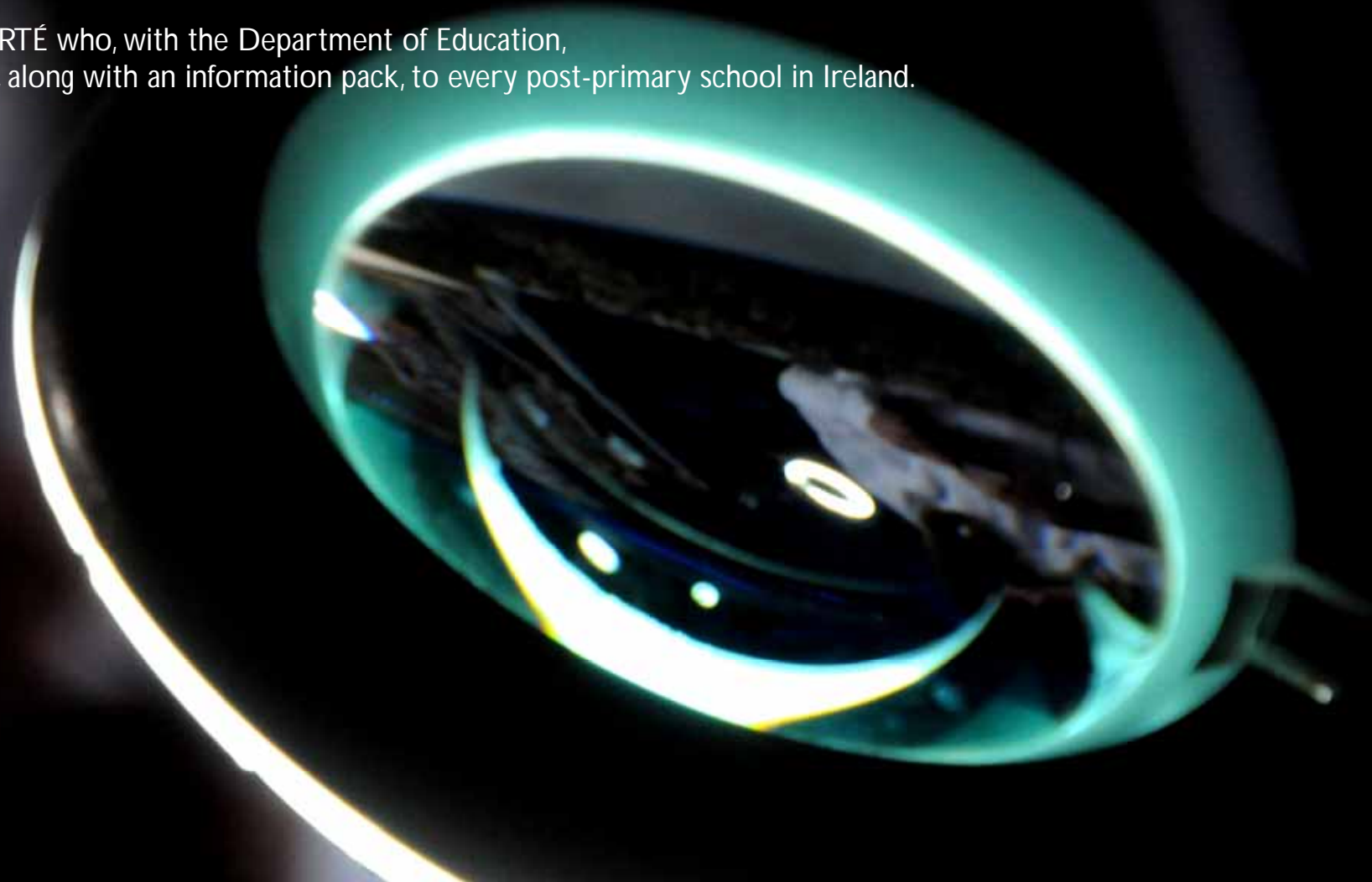
SPECIAL THANKS



SECRETS OF THE STONES

the book

is published by Ashfield Press and RTÉ who, with the Department of Education,
is sending two copies of the book, along with an information pack, to every post-primary school in Ireland.



THE PRODUCTION

The Music

Stephen McKeon is an Irish composer of film and television soundtrack music. He received an Irish Film and Television Award for the movie *The Tiger's Tail* and was nominated for *Blind Flight*. His other works include: *The Nephew* (1998) and *Borstal Boy* (2000). McKeon has also provided the score for a number of the more recent Hercule Poirot TV movies earning numerous positive reviews for his dark and complex music. He is noted for the wide range of projects he undertakes making him difficult to categorise

Photography

Barry Donnellan

3D Graphics

The Farm: Niall Ó Hoisín, Brian Ó Durnin, Cathal Jordan, Kelmens Kopetsky, Chris Bonasko



This series was made with assistance from



SECRETS OF THE STONES is produced by

RTÉ Cork

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Fluid Pictures
The Farm

THE BOOK

Secrets of the Stones is published by Ashfield Press. See www.ashfieldpress.com

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Brochure design by Joseph Hoban

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