

La Varde

Early Guernsey Archaeology Site

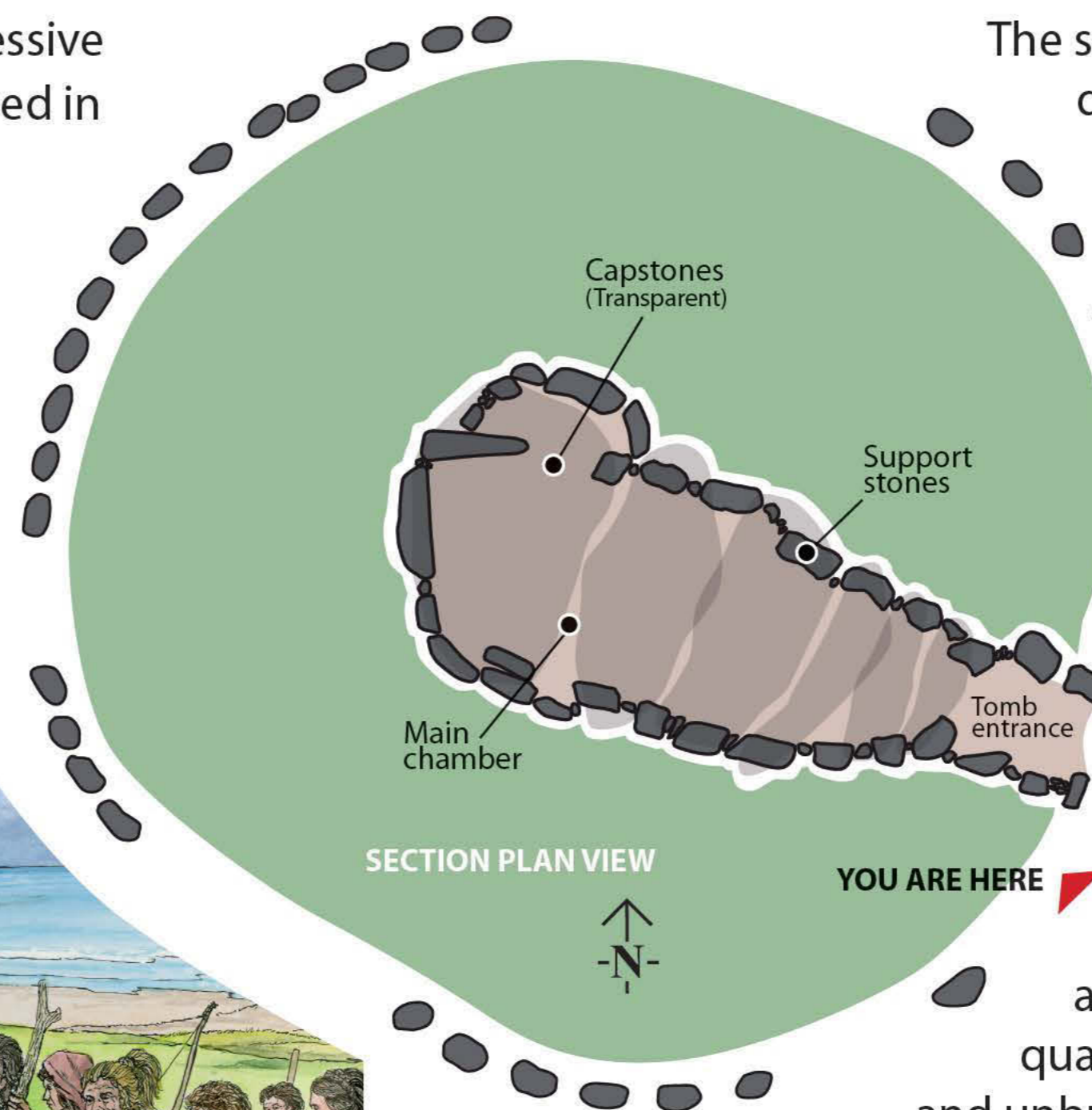
2 Prehistoric passage grave

This prehistoric passage grave is the largest and most impressive surviving megalithic structure in the island. It is bottle-shaped in plan with a narrow entrance leading to a wider chamber. It was built during the Neolithic period c 4000-2500 BC and was in use until the Late Bronze Age c 1000 BC.

The tomb is 10 metres long and the huge main capstone weighs well over ten tonnes. The uprights are graduated in size from the entrance to the rear. There is a small oval recess at the north-west corner of the chamber.



Artists impression of a burial party approaching the chamber
Illustration by Brian Byron



The site was discovered during military exercises in 1811 when human skulls and bones were unearthed. F C Lukis excavated the site in 1837. He recorded two layers of paving, indicating successive periods of use, and between and above these were quantities of burnt and unburnt human bone, indicating that successive burials or cremations were deposited within the chambers. Objects found in the grave included pottery, flint and stone tools. Complete pots and fragments of some 150 vessels were found, dating from the Middle Neolithic around 3500 BC, to the Early Bronze Age around 2000 BC.



Detail from a painting by FC Lukis of the interior of La Varde showing excavated pottery and human remains

Other Burial Chambers can be found in Guernsey



Le Trépiéd
Le Creux ès Faïes

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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