Human Sundial

pr Seren Griffiths is a Lecturer in Archaeology. She is a prehistorian who uses archaeological science to help explore the past. She directs fieldwork projects in North Wales and Northumberland, including in the landscape of the passage tomb Bryn Celli Ddu.



Brynn Celli Ddu is a burial mound in Wales. It was built around 5,000 years ago in a period archaeologists call Neolithic.

The mound has one entrance passage and was built in a very clever way. When the sun rises on the longest day of the year in June, called summer solstice, the sunshine shoots down the passage way and lights up the chamber. This is called solar alignment. Archaeologists believe this may have been a way to mark the passing of time like a calendar or modern sundial.

You can create your own sundial or clock using the simple instructions on the page opposite.

You will need:

- Chalk
- A sunny concreted or paved area you can mark with chalk

*Tip:* If you can't use chalk (such as on grass) you could use stones to mark instead.

 Decide where you are going to create your clock and put a mark in the centre with chalk or a rock.

- Get someone to stand in the centre of the clock and mark where the tip of the shadow of your head hits the ground.
- Write the number of the hour on the mark.
- Revisit your clock every hour to mark where the tip of the shadow falls.



Prehistoric means something existed before humans started making written records. Historians and archaeologists have to act as detectives and look at lots of evidence to work out how things used to be.

