



# STONEHENGE





Stonehenge is a prehistoric monument located in the English county of Wiltshire.

One of the most famous sites in the world, Stonehenge is composed of earthworks surrounding a circular setting of large standing stones. It is at the centre of the most dense complex of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments in England, including several hundred burial mounds.

# Stonehenge I

The native Neolithic people of England began construction of Stonehenge I by digging a circular ditch using deer antlers as picks. The circle is 320 feet in diameter, and the ditch itself was 20 feet wide and 7 feet deep. they used the chalky rubble taken from the ditch to build a steep bank circle just inside the outer circle. Inside the bank circle, they dug 56 shallow holes known as the Aubrey holes. two parallel stones were erected at the entrance to the circle, one of which, the Slaughter Stone, still survives. Also surviving are two Station Stones, positioned across from each other on opposite sides of the circle, which may also have been erected during this time. Stonehenge I seems to have been used for about 500 years and then abandoned.



## Stonehenge II

Construction of Stonehenge II began around 2100 BC. A semicircle of granite stones known as bluestones was assembled within the original bank and ditch circles.

The bluestones come from the Preseli Mountains in South Wales, nearly 250 miles away. There were about 80 of them, weighing up to 4 tons each. How they were transported is not known, although scholars don't regard the feat as impossible and various theories have been presented.

Second, the entranceway to the semicircle of bluestones is aligned with the midsummer sunrise. The alignment was continued by the clearing of a new approach to the site, "The Avenue," which has ditches and banks on either side like the original outer circle.



## Stonehenge III

Stonehenge III is the stone circle that is still visible today. During this phase, which was started in about **2000 BC**, the builders constructed a circle of upright sarsen stones, each pair of which was topped with a stone lintel (horizontal capstone). The lintels are curved to create a complete circle on top.

There were originally 30 upright stones; 17 of these still stand.

Within this stone ring was erected a horseshoe formation of the same construction, using 10 upright stones. Here the trilithons stand separated from one another, in 5 pairs. Eight of the original ten stones remain. The horseshoe shape opens directly towards the Slaughter Stone and down the Avenue, aligned with the summer solstice sunrise.



# Archaeological research and restoration.

John Aubrey was one of the first to examine the site with a scientific eye in 1666, and recorded in his plan of the monument the pits that now bear his name.

William Stukeley continued Aubrey's work in the early 18th century, but took an interest in the surrounding monuments as well, identifying the Cursus and the Avenue.

The most accurate early plan of Stonehenge was that made by Bath architect John Wood in 1740. His original annotated survey has recently been computer redrawn and published. Importantly Wood's plan was made before the collapse of the southwest trilithon, which fell in 1797 and was restored in 1958.



William Cunnington was the next to tackle the area in the early 19th century. He excavated some 24 barrows before digging in and around the stones and discovered charred wood, animal bones, pottery and urns.

William Gowland the first major restoration of the monument in 1901 which involved the straightening and concrete setting of sarsen stone number 56 which was in danger of falling. In straightening the stone he moved it about half a metre from its original position. Gowland also took the opportunity to further excavate the monument in what was the most scientific dig to date.



Hawley's work in the 40s and 50s, and discovered the carved axes and daggers on the Sarsen Stones.

in 1978 by Atkinson he discovered the remains of the Stonehenge Archer in the outer ditch.

More recent excavations include a series of digs held between 2003 and 2008. This project mainly investigated other monuments in the landscape and their relationship with the stones — notably Durrington Walls.

A new landscape investigation was conducted in April 2009. A shallow mound, rising to about 40 cm (16 inches) was identified between stones 54 (inner circle) and 10 (outer circle), clearly separated from the natural slope.

In July 2010 the Stonehenge New Landscapes Project discovered what appears to be a new henge less than 1 kilometre away from the main site.





