

## STONEHENGE and DURRINGTON WALLS

Earliest surviving theatre and temple in the world.

Stones not only represent the dead but physically be the dead. Represent idea, the heart of the universe which is how you go into the other world and how other world creates life in a never ending circle.

Imposing and mysterious stones dominates the landscape of Wiltshire. It sits surrounded by ancient burial mounds, standing stones and henges. Most iconic monument in Britain.

Enigma: Devil, Temple of Druids, Fertility Symbol, Computer, Burial place of giants, Sun worship.

800k tourists p.a.

Now closer to being understood. One of biggest archaeological research projects of recent times taking place in the surrounding landscape. Link Stonehenge with much bigger henge just over I mile away called Durrington Walls-a henge is basically a round, mad-made ring of chalk surrounded by a bank and ditch on inside similar to an amphitheatre. Excavation is uncovering evidence of:

- What was Stonehenge for
- Why it is where it is
- Who built it.

Excavation project started 2003 and scheduled to run until 2013. Led by an expert on the Neolithic period (about 4,500 years ago).

- 100 students
- Surveyors
- Geophysicists
- Environmental archaeologists-plant remains, animal bones, micro structure of the soil.
- Specialists in excavation techniques.
- Recording systems.

Overall the very best have been brought together to work as a team.

Stonehenge is not a monument in isolation-it is surrounded by archaeological remains from pre-history incl round barrows.

Why here and why so much evidence from the prehistoric past?

Visitor from Madagascar-built for ancestors. In Madagascar some native people still erect standing stones to commemorate the ancestors. Live life in ephemeral timber structures, stone represents the dead, timber the living.

Link Stonehenge and Durrington Walls together.

Now discovered that Durrington Walls dates to 2600BC, much earlier than thought. Avenue linking Durrington Walls to the river like Stonehenge. This was proof of interlinking of the 2 sites. I timber, one stone. Durrington Walls may have been for feasting and celebration, starting place of symbolic journey towards death. At Durrington Walls found:

- Small no of bones with tips of flint arrows embedded in them (pig and cattle) suggesting shooting of domestic animals, possibly as part of the feasting process.

Discoveries:

- Arrow heads
- Scraper
- Several dozen bone pins, highly polished.
- Hazel nuts
- Flint blades

Stonehenge today dates to about 2500 BC but site has much longer history. It is not the oldest monument in this unique landscape. One of the earliest monuments in the world is located right under the car park!

During the 1960s 3 post holes were discovered. Small pieces of burnt charcoal were recovered from the pit-from charred end of posts set in the holes. Lab report stated that the wood was pine-which raised eyebrows because it is not a pine landscape. Meant pits had to be considerably older-date to about 8000 BC, right after end of Ice Age.

What happened at Stonehenge in the era following the Ice Age?

- Started life as a circular ditch and bank around 3000BC
- In following centuries people started adding to it in all sorts of ways.
- Lots of post holes indicating a timber monument there. Excavated in the 1920s-not high tech. Looking at many rebuildings and a variety of arrangements which over the years would look messy and hard to decipher.
- Pattern of coming back-posts in the ground. Close to why of SH?

Nowhere have more cremations than Stonehenge. 50 excavated in the 1920s which extrapolates to, say, 240 cremation burials over many, many centuries-possibly over a 1000 year time span. Burials probably represent important people-like Westminster Abbey today.

Big change happened before 2400BC. First Blue Stones arrived from Wales along with Sarsen Stones from nearby. Then SH took the form it is today.

Mesolithic: Between Palaeolithic and the Neolithic: 12000-3000BC in Europe

Early Neolithic: 4500BC

Late Neolithic; 3500BC

Early Bronze Age: 2200BC

Middle Bronze Age: 1750-1000BC

Clues to Origins:

- Landscape-open, treeless, granary landscape.
- Open with fewer trees than exist today. Pasture and arable landscape.
- Mesolithic posts in car park would have been erected in a natural clearing in a not very dense woodland. Erected large posts which were visited periodically and it became a special place with special reverence and activity.

At Durrington Walls found evidence of houses-possibly to house the people who constructed Durrington Walls and Stonehenge.

Houses very small-5.5M by 5.5M. Central square area which is plastered. Walls wattle and daub.

Plaster area in middle of house square with hearth in centre. South of hearth found 2 dimples in floor –kneeling/squatting for cooking. Found pieces of pottery.

Active village at DW > 6 houses.

Logistics-building:

Large numbers of people. Ditch constructed as a communal enterprise. Segmented and modular form of social organisation. Each section of ditch dug by a particular group (about 40 metres). At intersection-not only drawn a line (shallow gully). Reckon about 200 people in each section-22 sections meaning over 4000 people divided into segmental groups-each section built by a lineage or sub-clan from a particular region. This suggests evidence of a class based society. Social difference in houses-leaders and workers.

Stonehenge emphasis on muscle-quarry and drag vast stones quite considerable distances and shaping them. Have to be individuals co-ordinating-Head Honchos and workers.

Interesting find at Durrington Walls-ord piece of chalk cut with interesting tool-narrow, blade like cut-possibly an axe-not wide enough for stone axe-perhaps by copper axe. Chalk weathers hence no fine details.Poss evidence of copper used in Britain 400 years earlier than previously thought.

Evidence suggests thousands of people coming to the region to construct monuments.

Why build Stonehenge where it is?

Bluestone from Wales. Assumed Sarsen from miles away but new theory-found 2 huge stones nearby which were erected where naturally occurred. Stones here all along. All sarsen standing stones are worked with exception of heel stone and 2 station stones. Reason: stones lying there-special, anomalous. Is this why Stonehenge is where is? Mesolithic people responsible for posts in car park congregating around heel stone, a special thing.

Durrington Walls- Henge-house underneath banks.

Henge built at end of occupation. About 1000 houses built under bank of henge at Durrington Walls. Huge no of people. Huge village-no peer in W. Europe at the time.

Material well preserved-people left debris on floor of dwellings, animal bones, tools, then covered up-echoes of Pompeii.

One special house: Wattle and Daub wall. Wall made of cob (chalk and plaster mix). Earliest example in Britain.

Every house has a pit dug in the corner. Might represent a closing event-feasting deposit. Remains of final meal.

Theory for Stonehenge: Temple to the sun. Aligned on solstice axis. Also a cemetery in earlier phase.

Prescelley Mountains. Blue Stone connection. Healing qualities. SH cult place of healing. Could be cemetery, sun temple.

Biggest settlements in Europe. Earliest use of metal. Overturned all ideas on SH.

Building on earth the process by which people go into the other world. Who are we, where have we come from, where are we going?