

STONEHENGE

A Wedding Ceremony Center

Paal Lindland

Copyright © Paal Lindland 2023

The material is protected under copyright act.
All further publication that is not authorised by law
can only take place after explicit permission from
the licences.

ISBN 978-82-303-5957-0

Print and binding: AIT Grafisk, Oslo 2023
Paper: 130 g Galerie Art Matt

This book is ordered through bokfabrikken.no,
AIT Grafisk's website for self publishing.

BOK  **FABRIKKEN**

This book is printed in Norway,
by an environmentally certified company



Contents

When was Stonehenge built?	6	Dressed and undressed bluestones	52
Who built Stonehenge?.....	8	Durrington Walls	54
Where did the stones come from?.....	10	Extravagant feasting.....	56
Stonehenge was exceptional	12	Woodhenge, Southern and Northern Circle...	58
Why was Stonehenge built?.....	14	Durrington Walls Avenue	60
The Great Trilithon	16	The Durrington Dong	62
The Trilithon horseshoe	18	Pigs were slaughtered at 9 months old.....	64
The Altar Stone	20	Animals from all over Britain	66
The Bluestone horseshoe	22	Calendar and time planner	68
The Stonehenge and Bluestone circles.....	24	Communal labor and property	70
Bluehenge.....	26	The solstice axis	72
Bluestone groove and tongue.....	28	A cemetery monument	74
The Bluestone lintels	30	Grooved Ware people.....	76
The Q and R holes	32	Bell Beaker people.....	78
Male and female stones	34	Primate breeding strategies.....	80
The Great Trilithon is unique	36	Western-style monogamy	82
The Trilithons and the		Polygamous Bell Beakers	84
Bluestone horseshoe	38	Replacement of Britain's gene pool.....	86
Groove and tongue opposite ways.....	40	The Durrington henge and	
Station Stones.....	42	penannular ring.....	88
The Stonehenge Avenue.....	44	Great Trilithon deep pit.....	90
Bluestonehenge by the River Avon	46	Stonehenge disintegrates.....	92
Bluestonehenge erected in a hurry	48	Silbury Hill.....	94
Bluestonehenge stonehole D	50	Bibliography.....	96

Thanks to English Heritage for giving permission to use photos from Stonehenge, thanks to Anne Skattum Jacobsen for drawing the front page illustration, thanks to Anne Scott Hagen for proof reading the English text, thanks to Knut-Anders Løken for editing the pictures and illustrations, thanks to Mike Parker Pearson, Mike Pitts and all the other authors from whom I have citations in my book, and thanks to the indigenous Neolithic people who built this astonishing monument and made so many people wonder what they had in mind and what was their motivation.

Author: Paal Lindland
Agronomist, Landscapgardener, Biologist
paal.lindland@gmail.com

“There must be a deductive insight – a flash of perception – that explains the how’s and whys. This is where we need theories and hypotheses – the starting points of all scientific endeavor.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p2

“When Richards Atkinson was asked questions about Stonehenge that began with the word “why” his response was blunt - there is one short, simple and perfectly correct answer: we do not know. But despite Atkinson’s pessimistic outlook it still seems worth trying to find some answers to this, the most challenging of the big questions about Stonehenge. Tackling it involves going beyond the hard evidence of archaeological fact and scientific analysis and attempting to understand the minds of the people who built Stonehenge – their hopes, fears and motivations.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p236

“The most intriguing challenge remains: “why” Stonehenge was built. Archaeologists have long recognized that question of motive are the most difficult of all to answer. What was inside the minds of the people who expended such extraordinary effort? What inspired the form, and determined the exact and careful placement of each stone? The starting point is often not the body of the archeological evidence at all, but a theory which forms a mold into which disparate elements appear to fit. We may be looking prematurely beyond the stones for complex answers to what may well be simple concepts.” *Solving Stonehenge*, Anthony Johnson, p91

“Was the sarsen Stonehenge an act of wasteful bombast by powers that felt threatened? [. . .] Did land-hungry immigrants encounter a competitive society with values which were a challenge that had to be confronted?” *How to build Stonehenge*, Mike Pitts, p216

“People throughout history have struggled to preserve and advance a cultural inheritance, whether that inheritance takes the form of a language, a religion, or a set of values. It would be hard to identify a force that has acted more powerful on human groups than the aspiration for cultural survival.” *The Triumph of Monogamy* David Herlihy, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Spring 1995, Vol 25, No.4

“Stonehenge is consistently devoid of any obvious practical function, or at least practical in the sense that we understand it. It may be that Stonehenge had no function as such, that it was the actual construction that was important, bringing individuals and communities together in a common purpose. This is how Jim Leary explains Silbury Hill near Avebury, an artificial hill of monumental proportions, sat in a valley as testimony to prehistoric willpower.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p23

When was Stonehenge built?

Stonehenge in its different phases was built between 3000 and 2000 BC. The first 56 bluestones were probably erected in a circle inside a ditch and bank, in what are called the Aubrey holes c 3000 BC. The Stonehenge we see today with the great sarsen stones was erected around 2500 BC (or 4500 years ago). Its age has been estimated by radiocarbon dating of deer antlers found in the refill around the stones.



In 1877, Flinders Petrie set up a numbering system for the remaining stones. This system is still used today. This picture shows not all the remaining stones, but those most relevant for this book. White stones are sarsens, blue are bluestones. Numbers above 100 are the lintels lying on top of two uprights.

Relevant citations:

“Stonehenge. It begins in c. 3000 BC with the construction of the henge bank and ditch and the digging of the Aubrey Holes within the ditch line. It is suggested that these holes might have taken a circle of bluestones brought from south-west Wales. In stage 2, c. 2900- c. 2600 BC, the bluestones were rearranged and a large timber structure was built. Sometime around 2500 BC the sarsen circle and trilithons were erected and the bluestones rearranged again.” *Britain begins, Barry Cunliffe, p188*

“Although Stonehenge ‘s big stones were put up around 2500 BC, archaeologists have known for a while that the ditch and bank around Stonehenge were constructed about five hundred years earlier, around 3000 BC.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p7*

“The new date for raising of the sarsens at Stonehenge was between 2600 and 2480 BC.” *If stones could speak, Marc Aronson, p47*

“The only way we can date Stonehenge is by using radiocarbon dates obtained from items of organic material that was deposited there when it was built and rebuilt.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p42*

“Only a single date is available for the outer sarsen circle; there is a 92% probability that this lies within the range 2620-2480 BC.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p178*

“Inside the enclosure and around the inner edge of the bank were 56 large regularly spaced pits, the Aubrey Holes, which were dug at the same time as the ditch. They may have originally held either wooden posts or small upright stones (of bluestone size).” *English Heritage Stonehenge Guidebook, p33*

Who built Stonehenge?

Agriculture and domesticated livestock (pigs, cattle, sheep and goats) were brought over the Channel to Britain around 4000 BC. Stonehenge and many other monuments and henges were built by the indigenous farmers who could be recognized by their distinct pottery style, the Grooved Ware pots. These farmers were mostly descendants from the Mesolithic population living as hunters and gatherers in Britain before 4000 BC.



Relevant citations:

“David Hall and John Coles suggest that the Mesolithic hunter-gatherers and the Neolithic farmers may well have been one and the same people. [. . .] They noted that Mesolithic hunter gatherer and Neolithic farming settlements very often occurred on one and the same spot.” *Farmers in prehistoric Britain, Francis Pryor, p45*

“In Mesopotamia, there is documentary evidence of royal dynasties, trading contacts and temple-building. By contrast we have no accounts of the people who constructed Stonehenge: there are no names or texts, no notion of the gods they believed in, or the cosmology to their world.” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p25*

“All over the world the earliest monumentality is associated with agricultural societies.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p136*

“The Herculean task of erecting the great stones at Stonehenge took place probably over a ten-year period. By any standards it was a remarkably efficient project, which was carried out by people who shared a very strong sense of purpose.” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape, Francis Pryor, p121*

“I believe that livestock was by far and away the dominant form of farming in Britain between, say, 4500 and 600 BC. It seems to me that the evidence of field shapes and layout, of tracks and drove ways, of stockyards and farmyards speaks eloquently of the prehistoric farmer ‘s ability to control and manage animals. But there is good evidence that cereal crops – mainly wheat and barley – were also grown and processed. Having said that, however, I do not believe that the traveler through the Neolithic countryside would have been greeted by many swaying acres of ripening corn.” *Farmers in prehistoric Britain, Francis Pryor, p148*

“Neolithic societies. It was the fundamental change from mobile hunter-gatherer groups to farming communities. At a broad level, it represented the change from temporary camps to a more permanent occupation of places, with communities remaining for generations rather than seasons. Neolithic people lived in small social units, mostly farmsteads, scattered thinly across the landscape.” *Neolithic Britain and Ireland, Caroline Malone, p45*

Where did the stones come from?

Stonehenge consists of two different types of stones: the tall sarsens and the smaller bluestones. The sarsens came from North Wiltshire (29 kilometers from Stonehenge). The bluestones came from Wales (240 kilometers from Stonehenge). They most probably were dragged on sledges and timber rollers by a huge crew of indigenous, monolith-building people, possibly with help from tamed oxen.



The bluestones came from Wales and the sarsens came from North Wiltshire

Relevant citations:

“The transportation of the stones over almost 20 miles of uneven countryside, the provisioning and shelter of the workers miles out on the exposed Plain, the shaping of the stones, the pre-planning of the design so that only stones of the right length, width and shape were selected, the manufacture of ropes and sledges, the lifting upwards of lintels six or more tons in weight – all these and many more problems leave one in astonishment and admiration that people with only primitive equipment could have completed their task.” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p229*

“The distance over which the Stonehenge bluestones would have to have been transported was not only exceptional in prehistoric Britain, but also for earlier societies anywhere in Europe.” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p34*

“Bluestones - rocks that derive from the Preseli Hills, about 180 miles away in the West Wales.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p7*

“Scientists have been able to determine that the heavy sarsens were all moved about 29km to be raised at Stonehenge; the smaller Bluestones come from 240km away.” *If stones could speak, Marc Aronson, p15*

“The transportation of the stones would not have been easy and must represent one of the greatest feats of the third millennium BC. Clearly, there must have been the strongest of motives for doing so – if only we knew what they were.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p133*

“Atkinson conservatively estimated that 1500 people would have been necessary to drag one of the large sarsens from north Wiltshire to Stonehenge.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et.al, p354*

“The largest stones, some of which weigh over 35 tons, are known as sarsens.” *English Heritage Stonehenge Guidebook, p8*

“The once perfect circle of thirty standing and thirty horizontal stones, and the five trilithons in horseshoe plan accounts for a total weight of 1500 tons” *Hengeworld, Mike Pitts, p136.*

Stonehenge was exceptional

Stonehenge was built by perfectionists. No (very few) short cuts were taken. The height, weight and volume of the stones are astonishing with the largest monolith towering at an immense 7.3 meters and weighing around 30 tons. The shaping and dressing of the stones are without parallel in British prehistory. The use of stone lintels is unique to Stonehenge. So many of the monument details were impressive. When taking into consideration the limited facilities available 4500 years ago, Stonehenge appears to be an architectural marvel on the same level as the seven wonders from Ancient Greece and the Middle East.



Stonehenge today

Relevant citations:

“It has taken a long time to eliminate the perception that prehistory is synonymous with primitive culture, a notion long abandoned by archaeologists. The skill and imagination of the Neolithic people who built Stonehenge would stand any test of intellect we might apply today.” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p267*

“Stonehenge - a monument which uniquely transcends all other comparable prehistoric buildings in Britain” *Hengeworld, Mike Pitts, p73*

“By 2900-2800 BC there were hundreds of rings, as far away as the Orkneys and north-west Ireland. In hardly any of these circles, wherever they stood, were the stones shaped, instead the pillars were left in their natural state.” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p72*

“The surveyors ‘pegs that fixed the positions of the Sarsen Circle and horseshoe were all determined in relation to the symmetry of the architect ‘s design. Not a single stone could be moved out of its carefully planned premeditated position.” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p253*

“Originally when they were erected, we know from the laser scan that they were pecking of the outer weathered surface of the sarsens to reveal a white, very bright appearance underneath. That would have looked quite dramatic and the sarsens being white and the bluestones being quite dark blue.” *Guide from English Heritage speaking*

“Great care was taken to ensure that the whole circle was aligned perfectly and horizontally. This combination of techniques is not seen on any other stone monument in Western Europe but was presumably derived from the carpentry techniques used in timber circles.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p180*

“The lintels (in the Sarsen horseshoe) have curved inner and outer faces but those on the trilithons also taper outwards towards their upper surface. This may be in order to create the illusion, seen from below, that they are vertically sided.” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p17*

“Stonehenge and other stone circles had indigenous origins since they do not occur in continental Europe.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p81*

Why was Stonehenge built?

Alternative theory:

At the beginning of the third millennium BC, Stonehenge, with 56 undressed bluestones (from Wales) in a circle inside the ditch and bank (in the Aubrey holes), probably had a function as a cemetery.

Somewhere between 3000 and 2500 BC Stonehenge became a wedding ceremony center in a monogamic Stone Age culture.

In the middle of the third millennium BC, the monogamic, egalitarian, indigenous, monument-building people of Britain were strongly challenged by the polygamic, hierarchical, family-oriented, invading, Bell Beaker people.

The best trained and skilled, the strongest and most persevering of the indigenous monument builders mobilized and stretched themselves to the very limit of their ability to build a wedding ceremony center (the sarsen Stonehenge) like no other in the Stone Age world.

Like a Maginot wall, they hoped this fabulous monument would secure their egalitarian, monogamic culture and create a cultural border against the invading, polygamic Bell Beakers.

Today most monogamic societies have laws against polygamy, (+abduction and rape) and authorities who are able to enforce the laws. In Britain 4500 years ago, they did not and the lack of such probably determined the indigenous people's destiny.

Relevant citations:

“Thus, there is the very real possibility that Stage 2 of Stonehenge was built at a moment of social and technological transformation, when its people were exposed to incomers and ideas from continental Europe. This cultural transformation may not just have simply coincided with the construction of Stonehenge Stage 2 but may have been its underlying motivation.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p105*

“It is to be wondered what obsessive urge compelled Stonehenge ‘s designer and the laborer’s who struggled with something at the very horizon of their abilities to create such a monster. It may have been no more than a demonstration to erect a megalithic impossibility that would astonish from that time to ours.” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p303*

“Every day people come to Stonehenge, sometimes in hundreds, frequently in thousands. Outside the rope barrier they look at the stones, wonder, listen attentively to their audio-guides, and still leave asking the same question as Byron did 200 year earlier: What the devil is this? *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p1-2*

“We undoubtedly know much more about Neolithic societies and what motivated them than we did even twenty years ago. But have we arrived at the whole truth? Sadly, that is a question that even the most meticulous excavation will never be able to answer.” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape, Francis Pryor, p179*

“No one has been able to discover by what mechanism such vast masses of stone were elevated, nor for what purpose they were designed. For nearly nine hundred years, people have puzzled over the same questions.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p354*

“In the absence of any evidence for the use of the monument as a living place – there are no central hearths or traces of the debris normally expected at settlement sites – it seems safe to regard it as a ceremonial site. The investment of labor in its creation, its sophisticated architecture, and its astronomical orientation points to a building of the utmost importance to the society that built it.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p196-197*

“It would be a mistake to think of local Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial sites as if they were Stonehenge-like churches in which ceremonies took place. Instead, the evidence indicates that the construction and repeated reconstruction of the site was both the end and the means to it. In other words, the construction and modification of the monument was its use.” *Flag Fen, Francis Pryor, p95*

The Great Trilithon

The Great Trilithon is the tallest megalith in Stonehenge. Two enormous sarsens (nr.55 and 56) with a horizontal stone - a lintel (nr 156) - which once lay on top binding the two sarsens to each other. It stands almost in the center of the 30-meter-diameter monument and faces the Stonehenge Avenue where the processions come and leave.

Why the Great Trilithon?

Alternative theory:

Sarsen Stonehenge was built with one main purpose: a wedding ceremony center for the egalitarian, monogamic, indigenous population in Britain.

The Great Trilithon was erected to honor the young stone age pair that was to be married. They would stand in front of the trilithon (at the beginning of the ceremony) and the lintel on top of the two megaliths was to symbol the binding of the young couple. In front of the enormous trilithon, females in front of no.56 and males in front of no. 55, they gave their promise; to be faithful, rear children and stay together for the rest of their lives.



The Great Trilithon

Relevant citations:

“Trilithon: A structure in which two large vertical stones support a third horizontal stone lain across the top.” *If stones could speak*, Marc Aronson, p61

“The stone still standing (stone 56) is more than nine meter and the fallen one (stone 55) is ten-meter long. Each of these must weigh around 35 tons and, together with their lintel, once formed the largest single megalithic structure in Britain.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p292

“The central trilithon was the tallest megalithic structure of its age and, reconstructed to its original height of almost 8 m, draws the eye of anyone approaching or entering.” *Materializing Stonehenge The Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries*, *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol.11(1/2) 227-261

“The lintels at Stonehenge have cups on their underside and uprights have studs on their top. The studs have to fit into the cups.” *How to build Stonehenge*, Mike Pitts, p179

“The trilithons utilized the largest stones available. The tallest were used in the central setting, Trilithon III, which originally stood 7.3m high. The pairs of trilithons on either side of this were slightly shorter, reducing in height from 6.6m to 6m high.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p182

“The lintel (4.70m long), now fallen, is unusual because it has paired mortise holes on top and bottom, suggestive of a mistake or a change of plan when hollowing them out.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p80

The Trilithon horseshoe

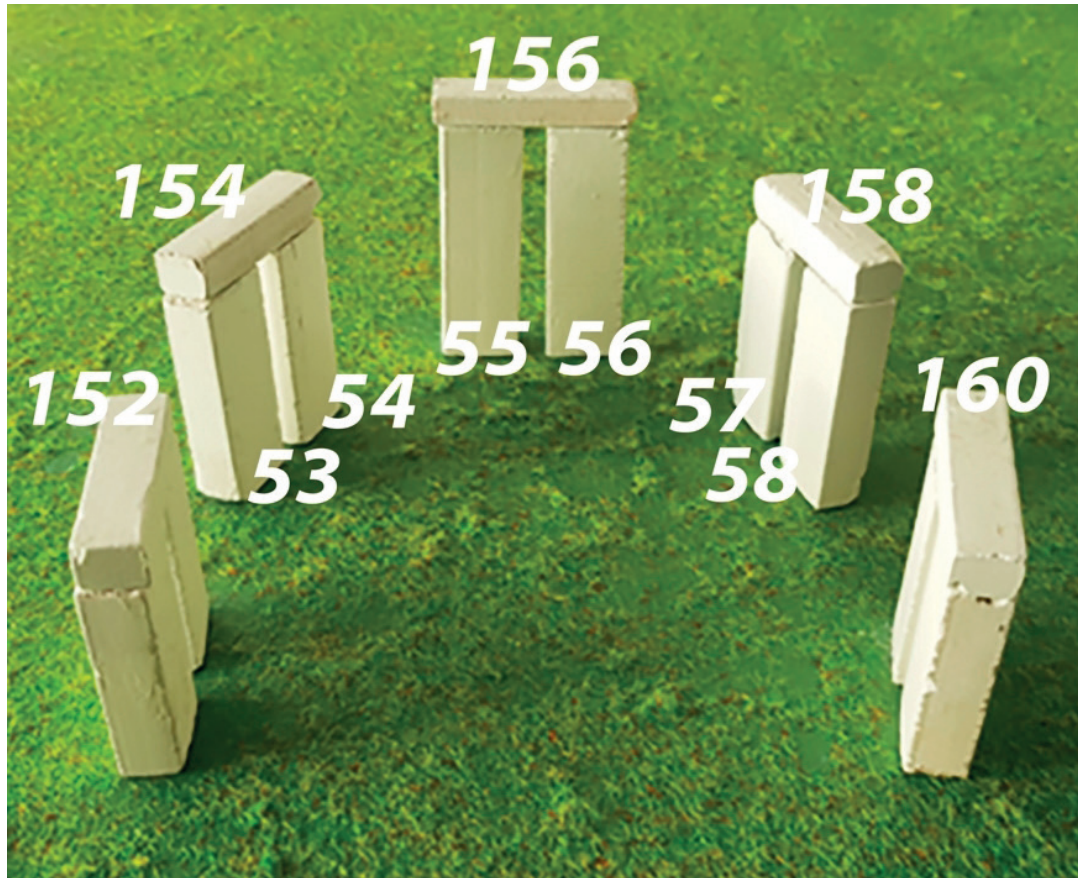
The Great Trilithon (156) is flanked by two lower trilithons on either side (152,154 and 158,160). The first pair a little higher than the second. Together with the Great Trilithon in the center, they constitute the Trilithon horseshoe.

Why the Trilithon horseshoe?

Alternative theory:

The Stone Age culture that built this monument had a strong commitment to monogamy. When a married couple some 20 years later came back to Stonehenge, now as a mother and father to either a young bride or a bridegroom. They were placed in front of the first pair of trilithons flanking the Great Trilithon. Parents of the bride on one side (ahead of 57 and 58) and parents of the groom on the other (ahead of 53 and 54). They were obliged to have been good examples and true models for the youngsters and now had the opportunity to prove their faithfulness.

The last pair of trilithons (152 and 160) at the end of the Trilithon horseshoe was reserved for the young couple's grandparents (if they still were alive and had the health to travel). The horseshoe trilithons with the lintels binding the uprights symbolized the lifelong pairing of one man and one woman.



The sarsen horseshoe

Relevant citations:

“There is something strident and confident about the trilithons to suggest they command the numbers, and it’s tempting to wonder if the uprights represent particular people – leaders or communities – and the lintels connections or alliances, the paired megaliths, which tend to have one stone more dressed and smoothed compared to its rougher, less “polished” companion.” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p175*

“It is suggested that the earliest of the central stone settings is the horseshoe of sarsen trilithons, dated by an antler pick found in the hole for stone 53 to between 2620 and 2340BC.” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p157*

“It is likely that the majority may well have died before the age of 40, there have been individuals who lived much longer, their age conferring great status and respect. No evidence has been found for any of the infection’s tuberculosis, anthrax and brucellosis in the Neolithic: it is not until the Iron Age that we see the first signs of tuberculosis” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p198/199*

“That community (that constructed Stonehenge) could perfectly well have been egalitarian, with only a limited amount of ranking. It would come as no surprise, to discover that grandparents and great-grandparents were held in respect and affection by their living descendants.” *Britain BC Life in Britain and Ireland before the Romans, Francis Pryor, p252*

Some people became old even in the Stone Age: “The woman from Österöd – a early Mesolithic skeleton from Sweden might have been 84-88 years when she died.” *Karl-Goran Sjögren, Thorbjörn Ahlström Lund & Göteborgs University*

“There is a big misunderstanding that people did not get old in the Mesolithic/Neolithic” *Lecture (ARK 1010) by Professor in Archaeology Ingrid Fuglestad. University of Oslo*

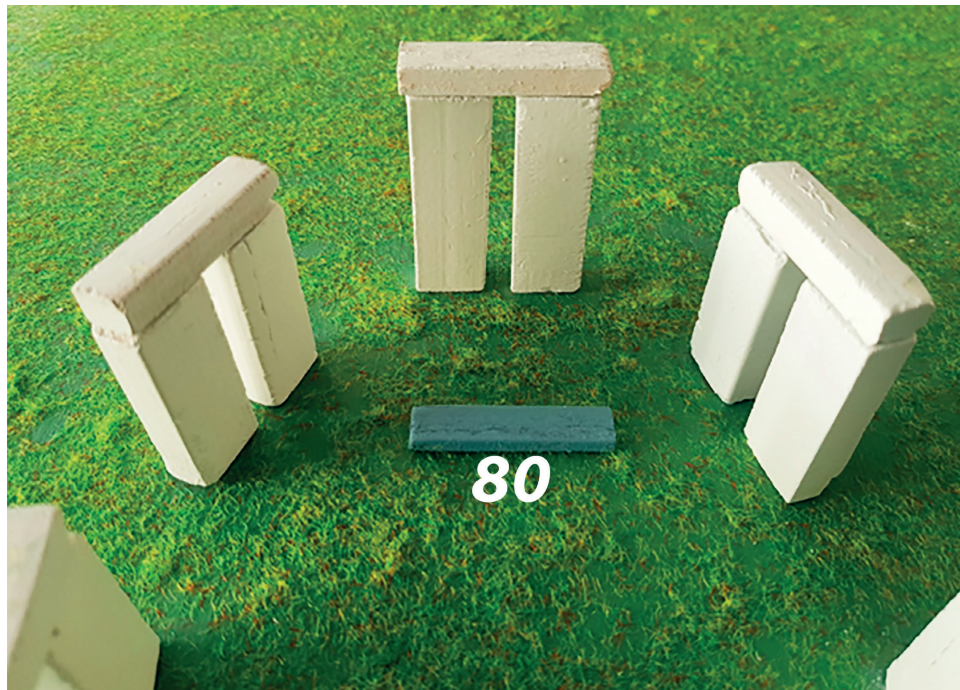
The Altar Stone

The Altar Stone (no. 80), which is 5 meters long, made of pale green micaceous sandstone, and is different from all the other stones, lies in the center of the Stonehenge monument. Today it is buried under the fallen Great Trilithon (no. 55).

Why the Altar Stone?

Alternative theory:

A shaman would stand on top of the Altar Stone in front of the Great Trilithon. He was the leader of the wedding ceremony (like a priest today). He would recommend the young couple to respect and forgive each other, and in front of him the young couple would give their promise to be faithful and stay together for better or for worse.



The Altar Stone No.80

Relevant citations:

“From 1719 to 1740 William Stukely surveyed the monument [. . .] he had a trench dug against the middle of the recumbent stone known as the Alter Stone which he discovered lay on solid chalk, which had never been dug.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p31*

“Mostly buried and partly covered by the fallen Great Trilithon, is a long stone with a distinctive feel and color of its own.” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p26*

“The Alter Stone is neither a sarsen nor a bluestone. It is a fine-grained, glittering, greenish sandstone.” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p20*

“When the Great Trilithon fell, it squashed one of the most mysterious elements of the monument, the so-called Alter Stone. [. . .] It could have started off as a standing stone, but it’s more likely it was laid flat, and perhaps used as a platform or alter.” *Secret Britain, Mary-Ann Ochota, p115*

“There is good reason to believe that the Alter Stone was selected for its visual appearance, as its micaceous inclusions, more apparent on fracture, are reflective display a distinctive sparkling effect.” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p128*

“The real purpose of the Alter Stone is unknown. But undoubtedly both its position and the distinctive petrology of the slab indicate that its role within the grand design was truly important” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p134*

“ . . raising the possibility that the Alter Stone was added to assemblage of bluestones taken to Stonehenge around or shortly before 3000BC.” *Constraining the provenance of the Stonehenge Alter Stone. Journal of Archaeological Science, august 2020, Richard E Bevins et al.*

“This is the Alter stone and it is very unusual because it’s completely different type of geology to all the other stones here at Stonehenge. We think it was probably some sort of central important stone. Alter is quite a good word for it. We don’t know what it was used for, but it is now buried beneath these fallen stones.” *Guide from English Heritage speaking*

“Of course, given that the Alter Stone is of likely Welsh origin. It quite probably had a long and varied history of placement within or around Stonehenge from stage 1 onwards, when the bluestones arrived.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p112*

“The Stonehenge “incense burner” is almost unique. [. . .] Perhaps it tells us that some of the people buried at Stonehenge were ritual specialists as well as political leaders.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p206*

The Bluestone horseshoe

The Bluestone horseshoe consists of 19 bluestones standing inside the Trilithon horseshoe encircling the Altar Stone.

Why the Bluestone horseshoe?

Alternative theory:

The stones in the Bluestone horseshoe were leftovers from a bluestone monument dismantled before Stonehenge was erected. Their new task was to allocate the positions where younger brothers, sisters (and cousins) in the bridal couple's family should stand. The youngest children would stand in front of the smallest bluestones farthest away from the shaman and the bridal couple. The tallest bluestone (67) stands right between the Great Trilithon (bridal couple) and the Altar Stone (shaman). Here the oldest youngsters would stand. To be a true part of a monogamic culture the youngsters were given a very central position in the ceremony, and standing between the bridal couple and the shaman was surely an experience to remember.



The Bluestone horseshoe

Relevant citations:

“These darker, smaller and more mysterious stones, the Alter stone among them came to be known collectively as bluestones.” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p26*

“Directly in front of the Alter stood the tallest bluestone 67 and behind it was the Great Trilithon” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p290*

The stones (in Bluestone Horseshoe) increase in height from 1.9m above ground (Stone 61) to 2.4 m (Stone 67) towards the axis of the monument, reflecting the increase in height of the sarsen trilithons behind them. Alle the stones have been shaped – or dressed.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p187*

“Standing inside and up to 1.8 m from the Sarsen Horseshoe is a group of highly distinctive tall and beautifully worked bluestone pillars (Stones 61-70), They appear to be contemporary with the Bluestone Circle, and both incorporate elements of a more elaborate setting.” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p160*

“The bluestones fall into two very distinct groups. Those that now lie in the bluestone circle are, as well as being of different types of Welsh rock, small, unshaped and many of slab-like form. In contrast those that now stand in the inner horseshoe are taller, slender and carefully shaped pillars. The contrast is very obvious today and must have been so when they first appeared at Stonehenge. So how might they have been combined if they all formed part of a single arrangement?” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p187*

“Inside the five trilithons is the Bluestone Horseshoe, 19 identical little pillars of spotted dolerite, and inside the Sarsen Circle is a ring of 44 bluestones made from rhyolite, volcanic tuff and more dolerite” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p34*

“The family and the clan provided a continuous background pressure to conform, life outside the group would have been impossible and unthinkable. [. . .] The common ideology meant that children, now frequently so unruly, were easily disciplined. [. . .] With adult solidarity and unity of teaching objectives, there was very broadly based supervision and any adult would correct misbehavior.” *The Stonehenge people An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC, Rodney Castleden p220*

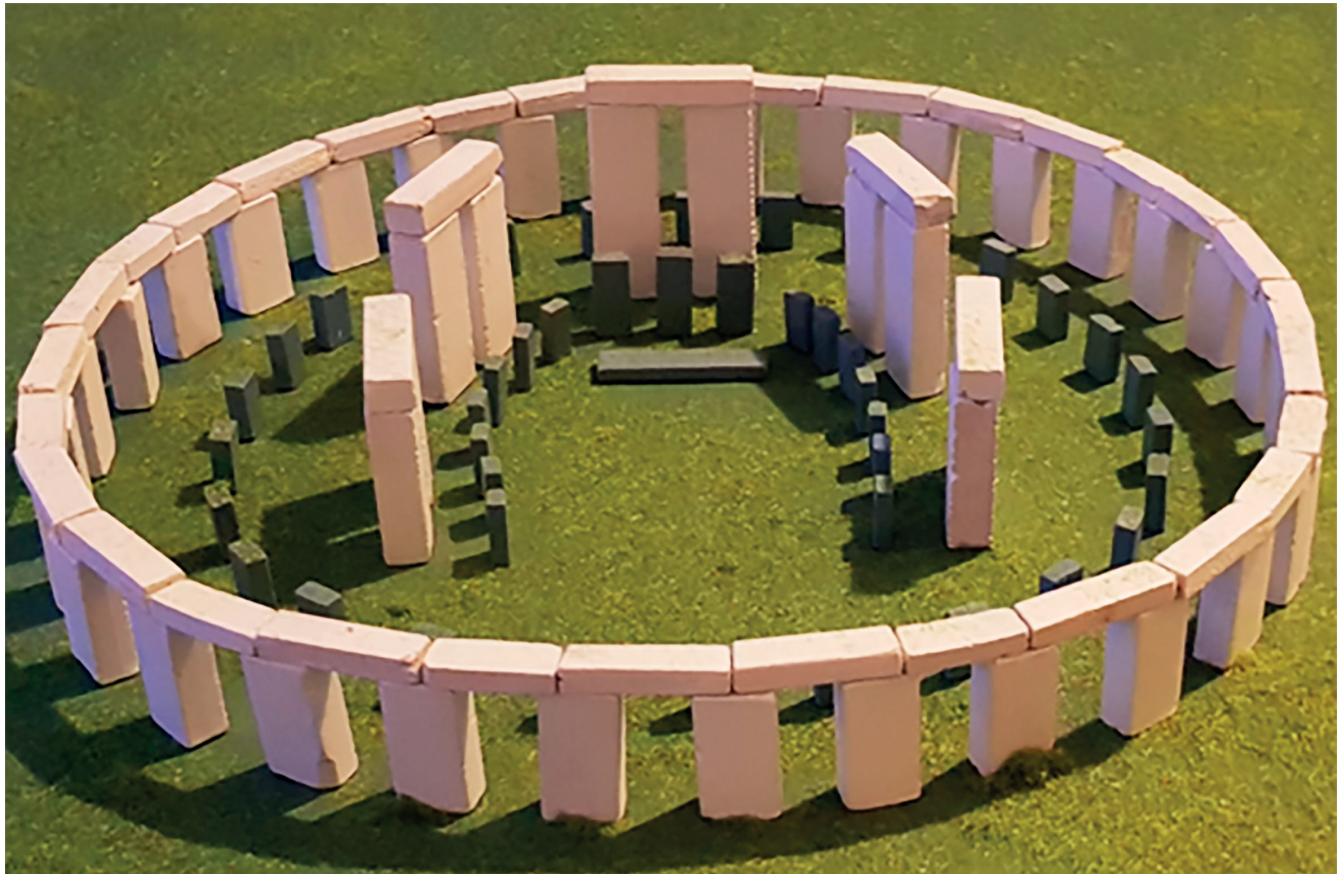
The Stonehenge and Bluestone circles

The Stonehenge circle once had 30 sarsen megaliths with horizontal lintels binding the megaliths in the circle to each other. Between the sarsen circle and the Trilithon horseshoe stands a circle of bluestones.

Why the Stonehenge and Bluestone circles?

Alternative theory:

Friends of the bridal couple and wedding guests from the tribe would stand inside the Stonehenge circle. Youngsters were placed in front of the Bluestone circle (leftovers from an earlier monument) visible to their parents standing behind them. The lintels coupling all the uprights in the circle symbolize their monogamic and egalitarian society.



The Stonehenge and Bluestone circles outside the Trilithon horseshoe

Relevant citations:

“The sarsen circle encloses a circle of smaller bluestones, inside which are five large sarsen trilithons arranged in a horseshoe. A trilithon (meaning three stones) is a pair of upright stones with a lintel joining them. The sarsen circle is about 30 meters in diameter, but it sits at the center of a much larger circle, about 100 meters across, formed by the bank and ditch of an earthen enclosure.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p27

“The upper surface of the lintels formed a horizontal ring about 4.8m above the ground. Viewed from a distance, therefore, the central trilithons appear with increasing height above the façade of the outer circle.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p183

“The Stonehenge Circle’s lintels connected to each other with tongues and grooves and the uprights with mortises and tenons, all perfectly shaped for immaculate fits.” *How to build Stonehenge*, Mike Pitts, p187

“Once there were perhaps sixty or seventy in the bluestone circle and nineteen in the horseshoe” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p137

“Many of the stones of the Bluestone Circle, have been damaged, broken or removed, but the Bluestone Horseshoe, within the Trilithon Horseshoe, is largely complete.” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape*, Francis Pryor, p161

“Bluestones in the Bluestone Circle (may originally have included as many as 60 stones) vary in size and shape and most appear to be in their natural state with no signs of having been shaped although they too, like the sarsens of the outer circle, appear to have their “best side” facing inwards.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p13

“The construction of the inner circle of bluestones and the Avenue were the biggest structural modifications to Stonehenge during stage 3 begins around 2400 BC.” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape*, Francis Pryor, p130

“The bluestone Circle is so dilapidated, with stones broken, surviving as stumps or removed altogether, and with large areas of the circuit unexcavated or disturbed, that there is no way of determining the original number of stones.” *Solving Stonehenge*, Anthony Johnson, p158

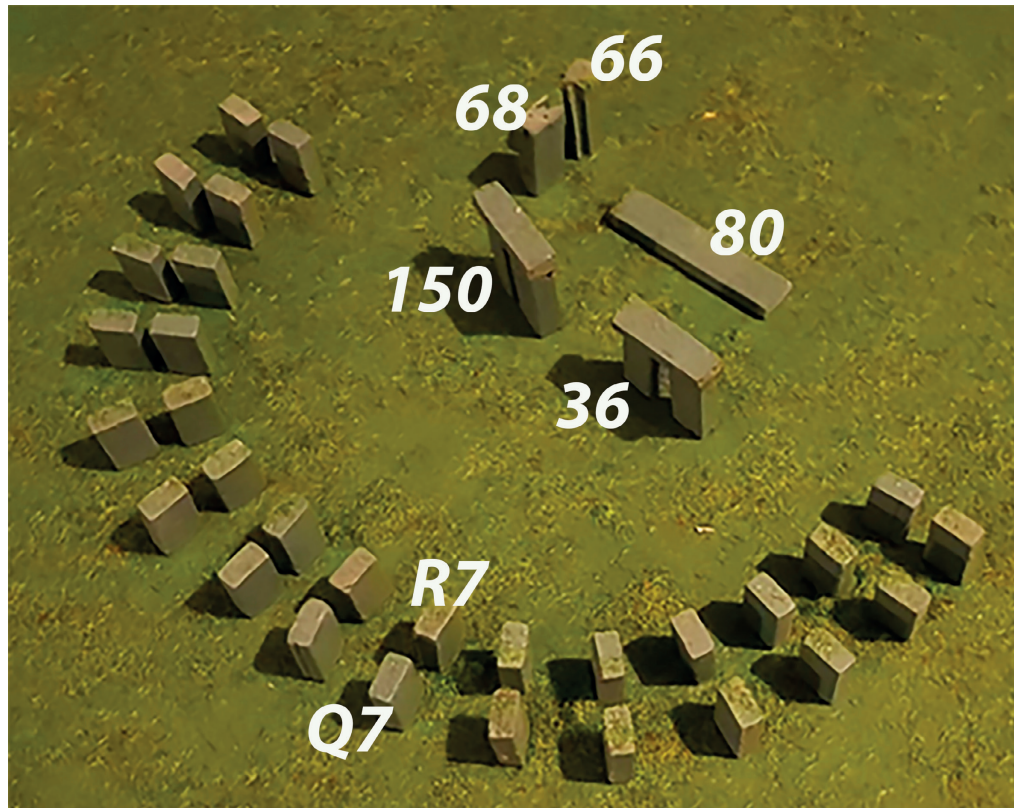
Bluehenge

Stonehenge was not the first monument standing on Salisbury Plain. Around 3000 BC the ditch and bank was constructed, together with probably 56 undressed bluestones erected in a circle inside the bank (in the Aubrey holes). From 3000- 2500 BC several new building programs were effectuated inside the ditch and bank, among them the construction of Bluehenge, which is a stone monument with only bluestones standing in the mysterious Q and R holes.

Why Bluehenge?

Alternative theory:

56 bluestones placed in the Aubrey holes together with cremated bones indicate that it might have been a cemetery in its first phase (c 3000 BC). Probably between 2900 – 2500 BC a new load of bluestones was transported from Wales, dressed on Salisbury Plain and erected on the same spot as Stonehenge, now with wedding ceremonies as its main purpose. This monument, Bluehenge contained only bluestones - no sarsens. Bluehenge was dismantled to give access to the new, more impressive monument – Stonehenge. The main reason for dismantling Bluehenge and constructing Stonehenge was the invasion of the polygynous Bell Beaker people. The indigenous people believed there was a need for a more impressive wedding ceremony center to secure their monogamic culture. No one knows exactly how the bluestones were arranged in Bluehenge, but the double arc of Q and R holes (with coupled stones symbolizing the bond between a male and a female) was probably a main part of the monument.



Nobody knows exactly how the bluestones were arranged in Bluehenge.
The figure shows one possible alternative.

Relevant citations:

“The spectacular stone monument that the visitor sees today at Stonehenge is not the first stone monument to have stood on the site. It is a replacement of an earlier structure, which incorporates the original stones reset in new positions. [. . .] These are the famous bluestones. They no longer stand in their original position but have been re-used in the monument we see today.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p132

“William Hawley describing his work among the stones in 1924: “The ground was honeycombed with post holes and craters of all sorts, sizes, and depths, many of them having been cut into another apparently in successive periods of digging and suggesting a series of changes.” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p139

“The recent date seems more appropriate: Stonehenge as a culmination of a tradition, not an initiation.” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p144

“The bluestones have moved a lot. There is evidence that they were the original stones set into the Aubrey holes, which would mean they were here at the beginning of everything, around 3000 BC. Then around 2500BC they were arranged into a double arc inside the sarsen circle. They were rearranged again around 300years later, around 2200BC, to form a circle and a horseshoe.” *Secret Britain*, Mary-Ann Ochota, p117

“Stonehenge developed over at least eight phases of building/remodeling over 1000 years. Phase 1 : Ditch and bank and Aubrey holes. Phase 2: Timber circle. Phase 3: Bluestone ring”. Phase 4-8: Sarsen Stonehenge (as we partly see it today).” *Neolithic Britain and Ireland*, Caroline Malone, p183

“The first stone monument at the center of Stonehenge was almost completely demolished by its builders. So, what this structure actually looked like is a mystery” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p139

“In the first phase (C.3000-2950 BC), Stonehenge was merely a circular bank and a ditch, possible with the circle of 56 pits. Phase 2 is undated and consisted of myriad timber posts followed by probably more than 200 cremation burials. The Welsh bluestones were then put up (Phase 3i), taken down and the sarsens put up (Phase 3ii), followed by three more phases of rebuilding (Phases 3iii-3v) before 2000 BC.” *Materializing Stonehenge The Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries*, *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol.11(1/2) 227-261

Bluestone groove and tongue

Two of the bluestones are shaped – one with a groove and the other with a tongue. Today, these stones 68 and 66 stand between the Great Trilithon and the Altar Stone (no. 66 is broken in pieces by the fallen Great Trilithon no. 55). No. 68 is positioned in front of the Great Trilithon 56 and no. 66 in front of the Great Trilithon no. 55.

Why did two of the bluestones have a groove and a tongue?

Alternative theory:

The groove and tongue bluestones were part of the Bluehenge monument and were replaced by the Great Trilithon in Stonehenge. The bridal couples in Bluehenge were in front of the groove and tongue bluestones, of course, with the female in front of the groove (on the left) and the male in front of the tongue stone (on the right). The groove and tongue symbolized the coupling of the bridal couple and could give associations to the Bible text “They shall be one flesh”.



No.68 with a groove on one side

Relevant citations:

“Stone 68 near the Great Trilithon had a long, deep groove down its side, Stone 66, broken and under the split Stone 55, has a projecting tongue. Atkinson persuasively suggested that the pair had once been fitted together so that their combined width would match that of a broad bluestone on the other side of the axis.” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p245*

“66 and 68 seem to have been carved to stand together in semblance of a larger, single stone: one has a protruding ridge the length of one side, the other (in much reduced state) a groove of appropriate size.” *Hengeworld, Mike Pitts, p160*

“One of the bluestones has a lateral groove (68) and the buried stump of another (66) has a lateral ridge.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p135*

“A large adjacent hole excavated in 1958, beneath Stone 55b, was considered by Atkinson too shallow to have supported a large stone; he later thought that a pair of bluestones reused in the later Bluestone Horseshoe, one with a tongue down one side and the other with a groove, may originally have been united in this hole to form a large single block which would have more nearly matched the size of the Alter Stone” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p135*

“A highly distinctive pair of stones within this group lacks the classic tapering form; they were set in prominent positions, spaced 3.5 m apart on either side of the axis in front of the Great Trilithon. The stone on the west side (Stone 68), a tabular block with a slightly rounded top still standing 2,5 m high, carries a continuous vertical groove along its northwest face; its partner (Stone 66) now a broken stump which lies buried beneath the fallen trilithon, has a tongue along its side.” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p163*

“The tallest (stone 68) has a deep vertical groove running from top to bottom. Another, now an eroded stump, has traces of a corresponding tongue, which has led to the suggestion that together they may originally have formed a composite stone.” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p20*

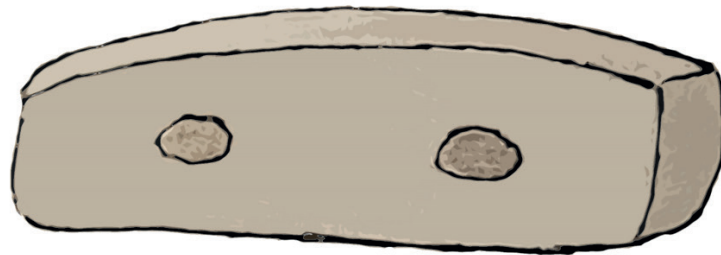
The Bluestone lintels

Two of the bluestones (36 and 150) have two mortise holes spaced 90/102cm apart and were obviously once lintels in bluestone trilithons. Four of the horseshoe stones (67,69,70 and 72) have subtle indications that they once had tenons that have been removed, indicating they once were uprights in two bluestone trilithons.

Why the bluestone lintels nos. 36 and 150?

Alternative theory:

The bluestone lintels (36 and 150) were dressed to be used in trilithons in Bluehenge which had the same task as their successors, i.e., the first two trilithons in the sarsen horseshoe (nos. 154 and 158). The parents of the bridal couple stood in front of the bluestone trilithons and the lintel on top symbolized the binding between husband and wife. Parents of the bride in front of one trilithon and parents of the groom in front of the other. The parents were obliged to have been good examples and true models for the youngsters. Now at the wedding of their daughter and son they would have the opportunity to prove their faithfulness.



Stones 36 and 150 have mortise holes on one side and obviously were lintels in what were once two bluestone trilithons.

Relevant citations:

«Two of the bluestones (36 and 150) have mortice holes on one side to receive projecting tenons from other stones. [. . .] Presumably the stones with mortices served as the elevated horizontal stones of three stone structures, supported at each end by vertical stones with tenons. Similar, doorway-like triple stone structures (or trilithons) were later repeated in the larger sarsen monument that still stands.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p135*

“Four of the horseshoe stones (numbers 67,69,70 and 72) have subtle indications that they once had tenons that have been removed. [. . .] We have three formerly paired uprights (all spotted dolerite), two of them supporting lintels. [. . .] Which begs the question, where were they before? Sadly, fitting these carved bluestones to their original holes in the ground is for us a hopeless task” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p192*

“The remarkable stone 36 also provided evidence that this was not a short-lived structure. One of its mortise holes was surrounded by a shallow depression, presumably a carefully worked seating for the upright on which it sat, and within this hollow the surface of the stone appeared worn, even polished. This did not appear to be deliberate but more the result of friction, perhaps caused by the expansion and contraction of the touching stones. But such a polish would only develop very slowly, suggesting that these stones must have stood as a miniature trilithon for many years.” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p123*

“Four dressed bluestones from the bluestone horseshoe – Stones 67,69,70 and 72 – were formerly topped by tenons which have been removed by later pick dressing. Together with Stones 66 and 68, which have finely dressed tongue-and-groove joints down one side, these four uprights and the two bluestone lintels (30 and 150) may be remnants of a series of carefully dressed trilithon settings, possible erected in Stage 2 or even within another monument altogether.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et.al p175*

“Six or seven of the bluestones are dressed beyond the needs of their current position, suggesting they once stood in a different arrangement of finely shaped megaliths. They could have been at Stonehenge in the Q and R holes, or part of an otherwise unrepresented arrangement inside the sarsen horseshoe” *Hengeworld, Mike Pitts, p159*

The Q and R holes

Richard Atkinson and colleagues excavated Stonehenge in the 1950s and straightened, re-erected and secured stones from falling. During this excavation the Q and R holes were discovered – a double arc, U-shaped series of holes cut into the natural bedrock between the Stonehenge circle and the Stonehenge horseshoe. Each Q hole was connected to a similar R hole in a dumbbell arrangement lying adjacent and towards the center of the monument. Chips of Bluestone were found embedded in some of the holes. Atkinson assumed that the dumb-bell pits originally had been dug to receive pairs of bluestones.

Why the Q and R holes?

Alternative theory:

The bluestones in Bluehenge most probably stood in the pits called Q and R holes.

These holes cause the bluestones which are raised in pairs to make a double arc in the center of the site.

It seems that the indigenous people who constructed Bluehenge were living in a very monogamic culture. It was not only the bridal couple and the parents of the bride and groom that had coupled and separate stones, the wedding guests were also located in a dumbbell shaped stone arrangement with coupled stones symbolizing the bond between a male and a female.



The Q and R holes in the centre of Stonehenge arranged in a U shaped dumb bell arrangement. No one knows exactly how the bluestones were arranged. This drawing might be one alternative.

A similar illustration is printed in: *How to build Stonehenge* Mike Pitts p 130

Relevant citations:

“The Q and R Holes lay at the ends of a series of short trenches, each filled with very tightly packed clean chalk rubble, holes and trench together forming what was described as a “dumb bell” shape. Moreover, when the bases of the Q and R Holes were examined in detail, not only did they show the impressions of stones but there were minute chips of bluestone embedded in the soft chalk. This was proof of bluestone settings predating the existing circle and horseshoe.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p121

“The second proposed major Bluehenge structure stood in pits known as the Q and R Holes, in a double U-arrangement, open to the northwest. [. . .] But it wasn’t circular. Its plan was U shaped” *How to build Stonehenge*, Mike Pitts, p131

“Several holes (Q7,Q8,R1,R8,R38) were cut by the foundation pits for the standing (and assumedly re-positioned) bluestones and therefore must be earlier than the extant monument. Crucially, one Q Hole (Q4) is cut by the pit for a sarsen (Stone 3) of the extant circle, and likewise it must be earlier.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p134

“Briefly the Q and R Holes are where bluestones once stood. The Q and R Holes are mostly underneath where the bluestone circle stands today. [. . .] Thus, the Q and R Holes were thought to be earlier than the sarsen circle, and probably earlier than the sarsen trilithons” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p169

“It is curious that no large broken fragment of bluestone from the earlier monument were found to have been deliberately used for packing the later sarsen uprights, the implication being that the bluestones which formerly stood in the Q and R Holes had been carefully removed and not broken.” *Solving Stonehenge*, Anthony Johnson, p146

“Even after Darvill and Wainwright’s recent excavations there are still no reliable radiocarbon dates for any of the Q and R Holes and the physical evidence is ambiguous. They always cut, and are therefore later than any postholes.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p188

“How long the bluestones remained in the Q and R holes is not known, but they must have been dismantled and the site cleared to enable the marking out and maneuvering of the massive sarsens” *Solving Stonehenge*, Anthony Johnson, p133

Male and female stones

Among the uprights in the horseshoe trilithons, there is often one stone shaped and dressed and the other rougher with a more uneven surface.

This appears to be deliberate but what is its significance?

Alternative theory:

In each trilithon there is one female and one male stone. Females stood in front of the shaped and dressed stones - to the left (53), and males in front of the rougher stones - to the right (54). When the parents and possibly also the grandparents of the bridal couple took their places in front of the trilithons, mothers were standing to the left and fathers to the right.



Trilithon II (stone 53 and 54).

Relevant citations:

“All the stones of the Trilithon Horseshoe have been shaped and dressed. [. . .] Whittle observed an alternating rhythm to the dressing and shaping of the uprights, with one stone in each pair smooth and sharply dressed, while the other is rougher and more natural in appearance.” *Keeping time at Stonehenge, Cambridge University Press, March 2022, Timothy Darvill*

“Like many other paired stones in western Europe the differences had been chosen for effect, perhaps “male” to the right, “female” to the left, like the arrangement of men ‘s and woman ‘s beds at the Orkney village of Skara Brae” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p267*

“The contrast between sarsen stone 53 (very finely shaped from a particularly tough rock) and adjacent 54 (betraying the nature of the original slab) is typical of the trilithons.” *Hengeworld, Mike Pitts, p27*

“Facing outwards from the centre the left-hand stone is often smoother and more carefully shaped, in contrast to the slightly rougher state of its pair. This is clearly deliberate, a similar pairing can be seen within the unshaped stones selected to stand within the Avebury henge and its associated stone avenue. But what does it mean? Do they represent the juxtaposition of male/female stones and if so, then which is which?” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p17*

“Alasdair Whittle has drawn attention to the contrasting appearance of the uprights when viewed from the centre of the monument: smooth, shaped and slim to the south and rough, natural and bulky to the west.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p81*

“Each pair of trilithon uprights shows evidence of “pairing” with one stone deliberately much smoother and more carefully shaped than the other.” *English Heritage Stonehenge Guidebook, p12*

The Great Trilithon is unique

Stones 55 and 56 (the Great Trilithon) is unique in having its smoother, flatter face on the outside of the horseshoe monument in contrast to the other trilithons in the horseshoe, which have flat inner faces and rounded, largely unworked, outer faces.

Why is it so?

Alternative theory:

The Great Trilithon (55/56) has a smooth, flat outside because this side was an important part of the ceremony (the outside of the other trilithons was not). When the bridal couple had been forged in the chains of hymen, they walked to the back side of the Great Trilithon and were no longer visible to their parents and siblings inside the horseshoe. This part of the ceremony symbolized the bridal couple leaving their family and starting their own home. The signal given to their parents and close family was: Let the young couple experience and adapt to a life that fits them. Do not interrupt, criticize and force your opinions on the young couple. Let them find their own way to a happy marriage.



Stone 56 (the bride stone) still standing and the fallen stone 55 (the groom stone) lying behind.

Relevant citations:

“Stone 56 (the Great Trilithon) is unique in having its smoother, flatter face on the outside of the monument in contrast to its neighbors (stone 57,58 and 158 on the left and 53,54 and 154 to the right), which have flat inner faces and rounded, largely unworked, outer faces.” *Solving Stonehenge*, Anthony Johnson, p139

“Two stones, however, demand more attention, to be smoothed and precisely fashioned like no others: 55 and 56, the Great Trilithon stone 56’s face and sides are all even to a degree you’d think impossible with sarsen, and are almost entirely finished with fine pick-dressing.” *How to build Stonehenge*, Mike Pitts, p177

“The same stones also vary in the degree to which their surfaces have been smoothed and finished. Their inner faces are flat, while most of the outer surfaces are comparatively rough. The only exception here is the Great Trilithon, the back of which is as smooth as its front.” *Stonehenge English Heritage Guidebook*, p37

“How were the Stone fashioned, this report was able to isolate no fewer than thirteen different techniques. [. . .] The dressing of the bluestones is very different from that of the sarsens, with a far more limited repertoire of just three identifiable techniques, all of which involved picking and hammering. [. . .] Most of the shaping and dressing appears to have done before the Stones were erected” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape*, Francis Pryor, p109

“A closer look also reveals that the inside faces of the stones, in both the outer circle and in the trilithon horseshoe, have been dressed, as have their thin sides, whereas their backs are either unmodified or have been dressed to about head height only.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p251

“Sometimes I heard a wife say: His parents ‘opinions are more important to him than mine. Pleasing them is far more important to him than pleasing me. [. . .] You have failed to leave your parents if you are more driven by their wishes and expectations than by your spouse’s” *The meaning of marriage*, Timothy Keller, p140

“Love and marriage work best when lovers are freed from concerns of lineages, estates, and dynasties and left free to make their own choice.” *Marriage and civilization*, William Tucker, p117

The Trilithons and the Bluestone horseshoe

The space between the trilithons and the bluestone horseshoe is very tight, whilst the space between the sarsen circle and the bluestone circle is almost three times wider.

Why is it so?

Alternative theory:

The bride's parents stood in front of the trilithon (57,58) and their children (siblings of the bride) stood in front of the bluestones (69,70). The shaman with his smoking incense cup and his unusual costume stood on the Altar Stone just a few meters from the youngsters. This could be frightening for the children (so close to the shaman) and that is why the bluestones were positioned as close to the trilithon as possible (as far as possible from the shaman) and close to their parents who could calm and soothe their children. In consequence, the space left for the parents of the bride and groom was limited.

The space between the sarsen circle and the bluestone circle did not have these limitations.



The space between trilithon (57,58) and bluestones (69,70) is limited.



Whilst the space between the Stonehenge circle and the Bluestone circle (only one stone left in this picture) is much wider.

Groove and tongue opposite ways

Today stone no. 68 has its groove positioned to the right (seen from the Altar Stone), which is the opposite direction of no. 66 (with a tongue). In Bluehenge these two stones obviously stood with no. 66 on the right side and no. 68 on the left (the tongue and groove positioned towards each other).

So why are they positioned differently (away from each other) in Stonehenge?

Alternative theory:

The Stonehenge builders had 4 basic principles when erecting the horseshoe stones. These were:

- 1) All stones in the trilithon and the bluestone horseshoe should have their front (the flat most shaped side) positioned towards the Altar stone (the shaman), though, with one exception: the Great Trilithon.
- 2) When coupled, males should always stand on the right side, females on the left.
- 3) The Great Trilithon should have its main flattened side positioned toward the sarsen stone circle (away from the inner horseshoe). The bridal couple started the ceremony inside the horseshoe (towards the shaman), and after having given their promise (been married), walked to the back side of the Great Trilithon (seen from the Altar Stone). This symbolized the bridal couple leaving their family, creating their own family and lives. Now they were positioned correctly, the groom on the right and the bride on the left side of the Great Trilithon. So, the bride stone is no. 56 and the groom stone is no. 55.
- 4) The bluestone no. 68 (with a groove) should stand in front of the bride stone (56). The bluestone no. 66 (with a tongue) should stand in front of the groom stone (55).

To achieve these 4 principles the bluestones nos. 66 and 68 had to stand with their groove and tongue positioned away from each other. This was unproblematic because the lintel on top of 55 and 56 was now the binding symbol between the bride and groom, and the brothers and sisters in the family standing in front of the leftover bluestones 66, 67 and 68 should not seek partners among their close relatives. So, the groove (68) and tongue (66) could very well be positioned away from each other in sarsen Stonehenge.



No. 68 with its groove turned away from no. 66 (lying under no 55 on the left)

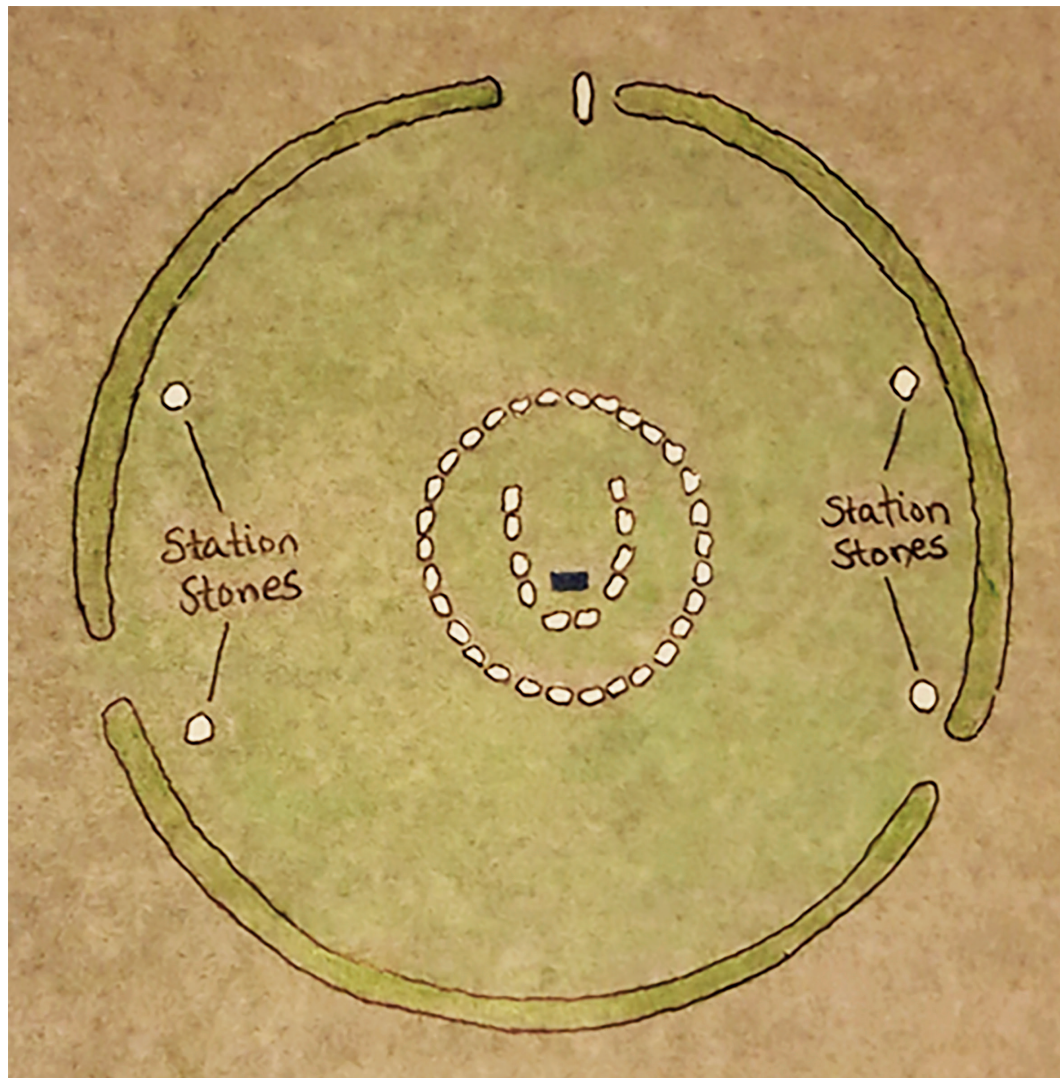
Station Stones

Outside the sarsen circle, close to the bank and ditch, was a rectangular setting of four minimally dressed and much smaller stones than the other sarsens. Two of the stones were encircled by shallow ditches.

Why the Station stones?

Alternative theory:

The wedding ceremonies taking place here 4500 years ago needed guards. Men with bow and arrow ready to take action if hostile people or wild animals entered the wedding ceremony. The guards were positioned by the station stones because from here they had a good overview over the whole ceremony area without disturbing the ongoing ceremony. Two of the stones were also positioned behind a ditch and a bank to protect the guards standing by these stones. Beside one of the stones there was also a small building where the guards could seek shelter.



Station Stones

Relevant citations:

“The Station Stones were most probably put in place at the same time that the central sarsen stones were raised, and their precise position was very carefully calculated. They mark the corners of a perfect rectangle with its central point in the exact centre of the monument.” *English Heritage Stonehenge guidebook*, p7

“Outside the Sarsen Circle is a rectangular setting of four “Station Stones”. Together, these four stones define a relatively precise rectangle measuring 80X30m. The Station Stones are much smaller than the other sarsens and they are minimally dressed.” *Keeping time at Stonehenge*, Cambridge University press, March 2022, Timothy Darvill

“Once they were standing, two of the “Station Stones” (Nos.92 and 94) were encircled by shallow ditches about 11m in diameter. The chalk from one ditch (No.92) was cast inward to form a low mound while chalk from the second (No.94) was thrown outwards to form a low bank.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p138

“The Station Stones were four sarsen standing stones forming the corners of a large rectangle. The Station stone in Stone hole 92 is likely to have been inserted into the floor of a formerly roofed building.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p88

“Visibility into or out of the reconstructed sarsen circle was surprisingly difficult; those inside could see little of what was going on outside the circle and those outside could get almost no idea of activities taken place within.” *Materializing Stonehenge The Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries*, *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol.11(1/2) 227-261

“The corpus of identified violence-related injuries from Neolithic Britain coincides with the period of monument building. This was also a time of attacks on some enclosures. It is possible that the building of such constructions may be symptomatic of a society coming under stress.” *People of the long barrows*, Martin Smith and Megan Brickley, p111

“Recent analyzes of human remains dating to the Neolithic period [. . .] about one in fifteen people buried in tombs of this period had been clubbed on the head, fatally in half of the cases” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p64

“Recent skeletal analyses by a number of investigators have produced a growing body of evidence for a less pleasant side of earlier Neolithic life. Improvements in the understanding of bone fracture mechanics, coupled with more detailed examination of skeletal material, have resulted in the identification of a substantial number of traumatic injuries consistent with violent assaults.” *People of the long barrows*, Martin Smith and Megan Brickley, p102

The Stonehenge Avenue

The main entrance to Stonehenge goes along a 2.8-kilometer-long, 15-meter-wide ceremonial approach way, limited by two parallel ditches and banks. This linear pair of earthen banks on the inside of two parallel ditches called the Stonehenge Avenue leads from Stonehenge to the River Avon.

Why to the riverbank?

The Stonehenge Avenue connected the River Avon to Stonehenge because most of the Stone Age people gathering for the wedding ceremonies came by boat from all parts of Britain. The navigable rivers provided the arteries of communication in Neolithic Britain.

The wheel was not discovered, roads were not built, domesticated horses were not available. So, paddling along rivers was the easiest way to travel.



The Stonehenge Avenue leading towards the River Avon

Relevant citations:

“In 1666 John Aubrey, the king antiquary discovered that there was an “avenue” leading from Stonehenge toward the river Avon” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p2

“The Avenue consisted of two straight, parallel earth banks with external ditches making a 12-metre-wide processional way leading up to the stone henge entrance” *The Stonehenge people An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC*, Rodney Castleden, p129

“Stonehenge Avenue was built upon a pair of parallel natural ridges either side of a series of unusually large and deep periglacial stripes all coincidentally aligned on the midsummer sunrise/midwinter sunset solstitial axis. This natural feature may partly explain why Stonehenge was located where it is, and has to be considered as a feature which was meaningful to people of the third millennium BC.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p431

“Stonehenge Avenue its role in the landscape is most satisfactory explained as part of a processional route.” *Materializing Stonehenge, The Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries Journal of Material Culture Vol.11(1/2) 227-261*

“The seaways and the navigable rivers provided the arteries of communication.” *Britain begins*, Barry Cunliffe, p236

“In lowland areas of Britain, ritual landscapes are frequently located along the floodplains of major rivers.” *Stonehenge The story of a Sacred Landscape*, Francis Pryor, p55

“In all probability the boats used were made of skins stretched over light wooden frameworks in much the style of Irish curraches used to transport animals and other heavy loads in more recent periods.” *Britain begins*, Barry Cunliffe, p138

“The trackways and seaways brought the peoples of the various regions of Britain into systematic contact with one another.” *The Stonehenge people An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC*, Rodney Castleden, p261

“By 2000 BC sophisticated sea going vessels were making regular, perhaps daily, trips across the Channel and southern North Sea.” *Stonehenge, the Story of a Sacred Landscape*, Francis Pryor, p19

Bluestonehenge by the River Avon

Bluestonehenge by the River Avon was a circle of holes partly excavated in 2009 and assumed to have held a bluestone circle of 24 stones. The circle, lying close to the River Avon at the end of the Stonehenge Avenue, was erected around 2500 BC and dismantled around 2400 BC.

Why Bluestonehenge?

Alternative theory:

The former wedding ceremony center Bluehenge had to be dismantled before the new sarsen monument, Stonehenge, could be erected on Salisbury Plain. Transporting, shaping and erection of the Stonehenge sarsens was a huge job probably taking decades to finish. During this construction period there was a need for a temporary wedding ceremony center. Since most of the visitors came by boat, the most practical solution was to erect a temporary ceremony center just by the riverbank of the River Avon, which became Bluestonehenge.



Bluestonehenge by the River Avon

Relevant citations:

“Bluestonehenge, the name arose from the discovery of a series of large pits. They appeared too small and potentially pillar-like for any of the sarsens in the area and were therefore assumed to have held some of the bluestones now at Stonehenge.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p42

“In 2009, at the Stonehenge Avenue end, they made the trilling discovery of Bluestonehenge: a circle of bluestones, originally from Wales, that once stood here beside the riverbank. This site may have been the original home of some of the taller bluestones now forming the inner circle at Stonehenge.” *If stones could speak*, Marc Aronson, p45

“It now became clear from the imprints in their bases that these holes had once held stones whose pillar-like shapes closely match the Stonehenge bluestones. [. . .] Extrapolating from the curvature of the nine excavated stone holes, we calculated that Bluestonehenge had consisted of twenty-five monoliths. [. . .] No antler picks were deposited in the stone holes when the circle was built. [. . .] One of the things puzzling me was why we had no chippings from the stones themselves, either from dressing them or from breaking them up on removal” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p223-224

“The almost complete absence of pottery and animal bones from the henge shows that this was not a place where people lived, despite its attractive location beside the river. [. . .] In one of the stone holes, we did find a fragment of an unburned pig humerus dating to 2670-2470 BC.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p229-230

“Bluestone henge consisted of a circle of about twenty-five bluestones that had been transported to the site on the river edge, fully dressed and shaped. No dressing or chipping debris was found in and around the stone-holes. [. . .] The stones at Bluestone henge were removed around 2400 BC and were most probably taken to Stonehenge, where it seems, they were used to make a new inner bluestone circle.” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape*, Francis Pryor, p127

“Discovery in 2009 [. . .] a stone circle beside the river Avon [. . .] pits, of a size and shape suitable for the taller, thinner type of bluestones [. . .] what happened to them [. . .] the obvious answer was that they were now at Stonehenge.” *How to build Stonehenge*, Mike Pitts, p133

“Bluestonehenge at West Amesbury, two antler picks provide a date for the dismantling of this stone circle in 2470-2280 BC. No fragments of bluestone were found in any of the excavated holes” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p47

Bluestonehenge erected in a hurry

Mike Parker Pearson commenting Bluestonehenge:

“One of the curious features of the stoneholes` construction is the diversity of methods used for preparing the hole to take the stone. Variation in stonehole preparation suggests that different people might have been involved in erecting each of the stones, making different construction choices. Perhaps separate groups had the responsibility of transporting and erecting each stone.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p249*

Why were several teams involved in transporting and erecting each stone?

Alternative theory:

Erecting Bluestonehenge (with the bluestones from Bluehenge) was done in a hurry because there was an upcoming queue of bridal couples waiting for their ceremony. Late Neolithic Britain probably housed 100,000 -200,000 citizens who produced potential bridal couples every day all year around. Bluehenge on Salisbury plain was dismantled, and Stonehenge was under construction, so several teams of labor were therefore mobilized to get the temporary wedding ceremony center, Bluestonehenge by the River Avon, ready.

Mike Parker Pearson continues:

“The collapsed topsoil within the stone holes of Bluestonehenge contained large quantities of charcoal, indicating that fire was an important part of activities within or around the ring. Since the absence of domestic debris indicates that these were not linked to cooking or feasting, it seems most likely that fire served to unite people around its warmth.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments Mike Parker Pearson et al. p300*

Large quantities of charcoal were never found inside Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain (as far as I know), so why was it a feature of Bluestonehenge by the River Avon?

One possible reason is that the wedding ceremony center at Stonehenge was closed down in the winter, so there was no need for a warming fire. But because of the pause in wedding ceremonies caused by the dismantling of Bluehenge, construction of Stonehenge and erection of Bluestonehenge many bridal couples were waiting. So, the wedding ceremonies at Bluestonehenge by the River Avon had to be continued into the late autumn and maybe the winter season. To keep the wedding guests warm, a solid fire had to be lit in the vicinity of the stones.

Relevant citations:

“Each pit base was different, suggesting that the cooperative activity of erecting a stone circle had been carried out by separate teams responsible for each stone.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p222

“Bluestonehenge, a 9,70m-diameter circle of some 25 or so bluestone pillars, may have been erected at the same time as Stonehenge.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p74

“Every stone hole is unique, an aspect of construction encountered at Bluestonehenge, and perhaps resulting from different work gangs having responsibility for each stone.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p85

“Bluestones (possible those from Bluestonehenge beside the River Avon) is thought to have been erected within the centre of Stonehenge.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p32

“The first structure at Bluestonehenge was a 10m-diameter circle of 25 standing stones, imprints left by the stones in the soft riverside chalk are consistent with there having been bluestones originating in Wales. It was dismantled in 2470-2210 cal BC.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p32

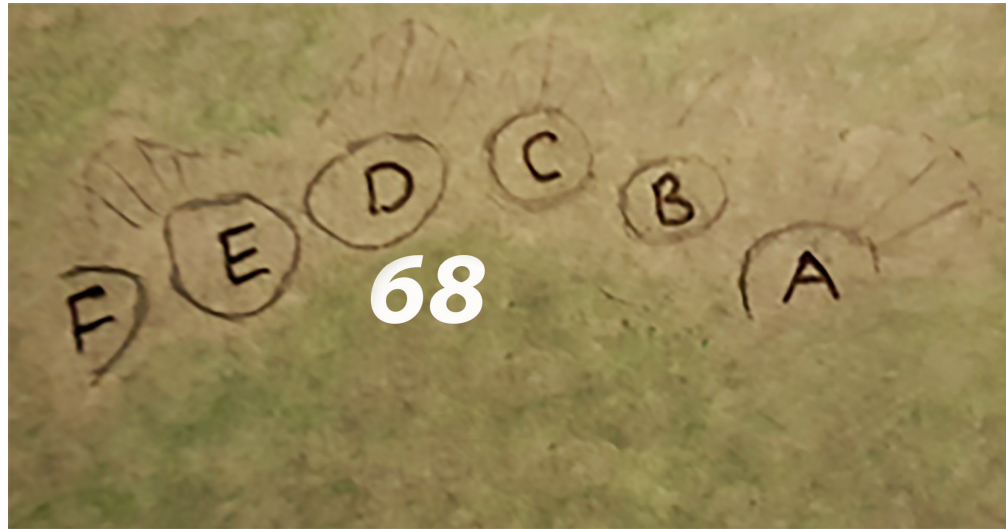
“These dolerites of the inner horseshoe might well have been those erected at Bluestonehenge, at the riverside end of the Avenue.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1 Landscape and monuments*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p213

“This involves accepting that the holes at the newly discovered henge at West Amesbury (Bluestonehenge) did originally hold bluestones and that it is these stones (24 or 25 stones from the dismantled Bluestonehenge) that now arrive at Stonehenge. If this is the case then they are set up as a new central circle, close to the rear of the horseshoe of trilithons.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p189

Bluestonehenge stonehole D

Mike Parker Pearson commenting the excavations of the Bluestonehenge holes by the River Avon:

“The imprints of stones D and E are so similar to the Bluestone 68 and 63 at Stonehenge (the Bluestone Horseshoe) that these could even be the very holes in which Bluestones 68 and 63 were initially erected.”
Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p248



The six holes (A,B,C,D,E,F) excavated at Bluestonehenge. .

What about the stoneholes (A, B, C, E, F)?

Alternative theory:

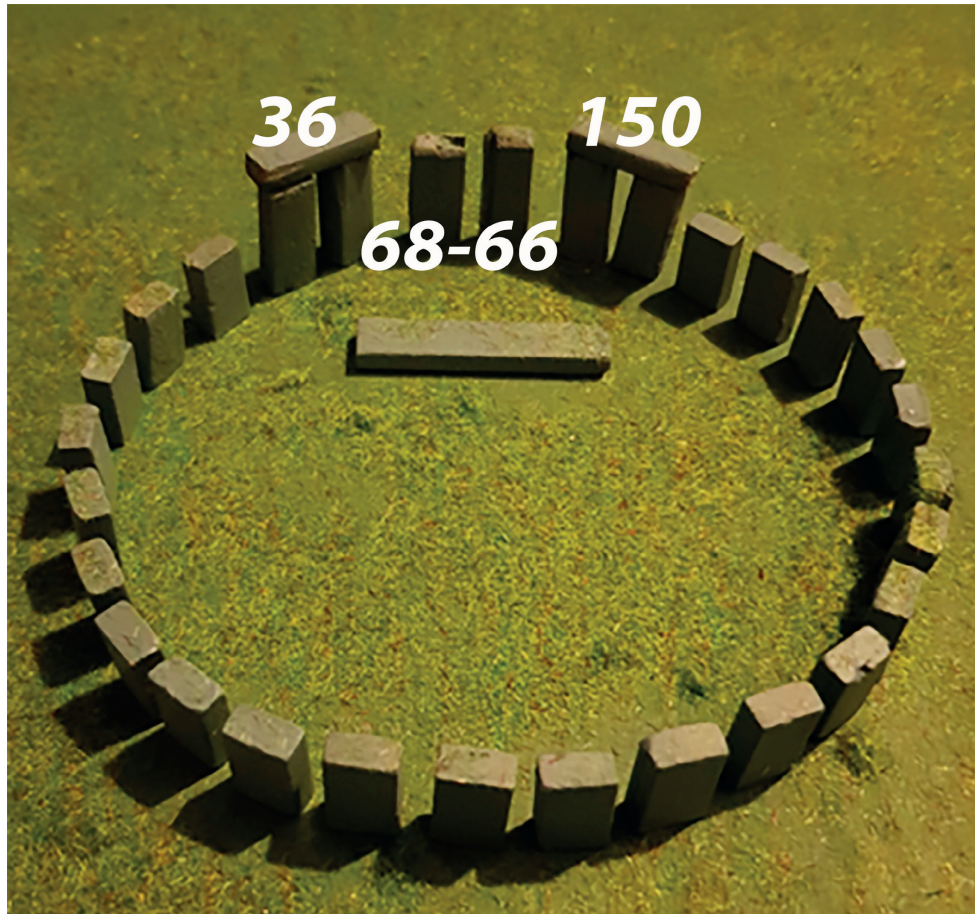
If stonehole D once held stone 68 (as Mike Parker Pearson believes), which is the stone with a groove along one side. Then stonehole C most probably held no. 66 which has a tongue along its side. These two stones (66 and 68) could have been the groom and bride stones in Bluehenge, now functioning in a temporary wedding ceremony center, Bluestonehenge by the River Avon, while sarsen Stonehenge was being constructed.

Mike Parker Pearson continues: “Intriguingly, the span of Stone150’s (Bluestone lintel) mortise holes would have suited the 1.16m average mid-point of the uprights of the 10m-diameter stone circle of Bluestonehenge. However, the total absence of bluestone debris from that monument beside the River Avon counts against such an interpretation unless these bluestones had already been dressed somewhere else entirely.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p175*

Stoneholes F-E and A-B could have been the position of the two bluestone trilithons (with lintels 36 and 150) from the former Bluehenge on Salisbury Plain. They were dressed on Salisbury plain, served as a wedding ceremony center, Bluehenge, before being dismantled, transported and erected in Bluestonehenge by the River Avon. If so, the bride probably stood in front of D/68, the groom in front of C/66 and the bride’s parents in front of the bluestone lintel E, F/36 and the parents of the groom in front of the bluestone lintel A, B/150.

Relevant citations:

“Two bluestone lintels with their mortise holes (Stones 36 and 150) survive at Stonehenge and some of the bluestone pillars have tenons on their tops (Stones 69 and 70). Quite possible they could have first stood as trilithons at Bluestonehenge before it was dismantled in 2470-2210BC.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p70*



Bluestonehenge by the River Avon - the way it might have stood 4500 years ago.

Dressed and undressed bluestones

There is a huge contrast between the natural, undressed bluestones in the Bluestone circle and the finely dressed bluestones inside the Trilithon horseshoe. The stones in the Bluestone circle have more in common with older stone circles from other parts of Britain. Whilst the bluestones in the inner Trilithon horseshoe area are meticulously shaped and polished and the products of a period where each stone had a greater significance and importance.

Why are the bluestones in Stonehenge so differently dressed and what is their history?

Alternative theory:

The undressed bluestone circle in Stonehenge could have its origin in the bluestones brought to Salisbury plain (from Wales) and erected in the Aubrey holes around 3000 BC probably while Stonehenge was a cemetery and before it became a wedding ceremony center. The tall bluestones in the Bluestone horseshoe were brought to Stonehenge (from Wales) somewhere between 2900-2500BC. They were shaped and dressed on Salisbury plain (inside Stonehenge ditch and bank) and became the wedding ceremony center Bluehenge. They were positioned in some connection with the Q and R holes. Bluehenge was dismantled in c 2500 BC (before the construction of sarsen Stonehenge), brought to the River Avon and functioned here as the temporary wedding ceremony center, Bluestonehenge. When sarsen Stonehenge was completed the dressed bluestones in Bluestonehenge were brought back to Stonehenge. Here these leftovers became the Bluestone horseshoe and reserved for the children and youngsters in the close family of the bridal couple. The less impressive and roughly shaped bluestones from the Aubrey holes became the bluestone circle and were reserved for the youngsters in the Grooved Ware community that followed the ceremony from outside the Trilithon horseshoe.

Relevant citations:

“The outer bluestone circle, being unimpressively small and squat, contrast with the elegant, shaped, inner horseshoe bluestones. These undressed bluestones of the outer circle actually have more in common with third millennium BC stone circles than with the bluestones of the inner horseshoe.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p175*

“We know that the final circular and oval arrangement within the sarsen circle required about eighty bluestones. Fifty-six of these would have come from their first arrangement in the Aubrey Holes. Someone must have brought an extra twenty-four or so stones to the site to make up the numbers.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p 224*

“The bluestones of the horseshoe were elegantly composed, meticulously shaped and polished, and neatly arranged. The circle of bluestones, like leftovers, were hastily and carelessly set up as though they had been no more than a method of using up the remaining stones. [. . .] All the horseshoe bluestone pillars had been skillfully dressed, and they were graded in height, with the lowest at the open mouth a full 3ft (1m) shorter than bluestone 67 at the apex, its top 9 ft 3 in (2.8m) high.” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p245*

“There is a distinct possibility that the dressed bluestones (of spotted and unspotted dolerite) arranged as the inner horseshoe at Stonehenge have a different history of use and location to those undressed bluestones occupying the outer circle. We suspect that these undressed bluestones formed the original stone circle at Stonehenge, placed in the Aubrey Holes I stage 1.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p215*

“Our hypothesis is that the bluestones of Stage 3’s horseshoe were first set up as a stone circle beside River Avon and were then moved to Stonehenge.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p215*

“There were originally at least 80 bluestones at Stonehenge, some weighing up to three tons.” *English Heritage Stonehenge Guidebook, p8*

“All 14 surviving uprights in the Bluestone Horseshoe are dolerite, and all are more or less finely dressed into slightly rounded and tapering pillars with rectangular sections and sharp corners. By contrast the stones in the Bluestone Circle display varied lithologies, shapes and sizes, and only three of them appear to be dressed.” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p191*

“Why only some of the bluestone monoliths were dressed and the remainder were not – in contrast to the sarsens – is something of a mystery.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p83*

Durrington Walls

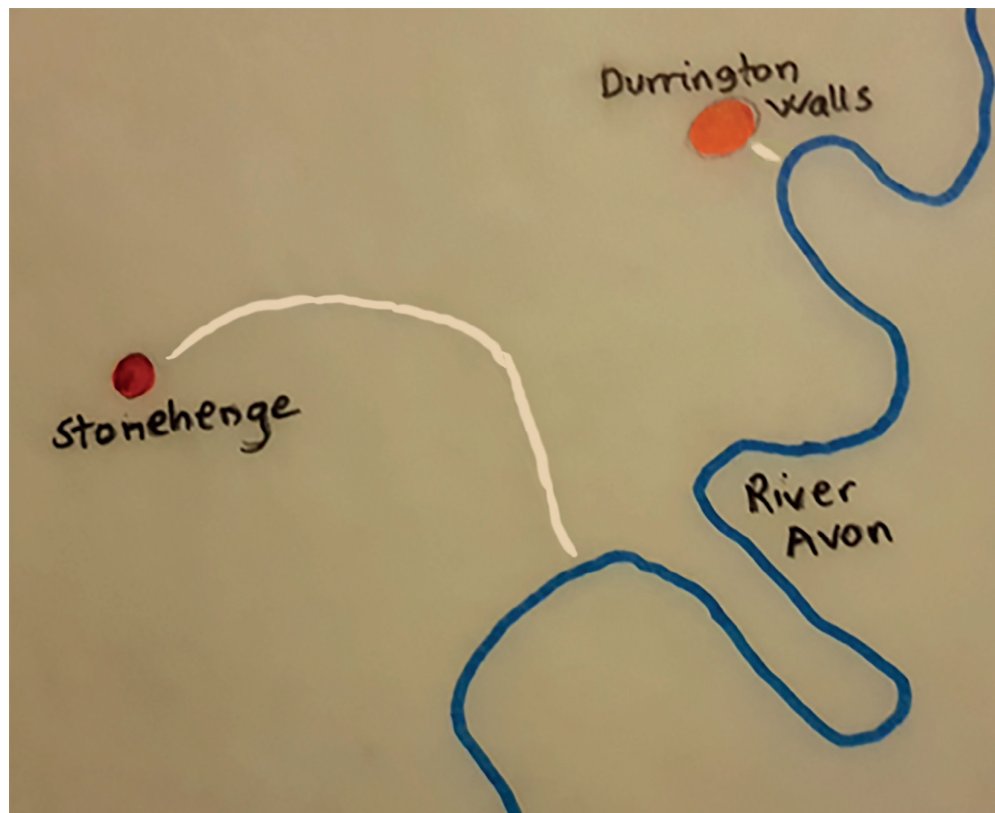
Durrington Walls was a huge settlement enclosed by a ditch and bank, located close to the River Avon, 3 km from Stonehenge. It contained some huge and many smaller buildings and it was occupied at the time that the major stone-erection phase began at Stonehenge. Durrington Walls is known for its many heaps of pig bones, broken pottery and trash from celebrations and big feasts.

Mike Parker Pearson writes:

“What particularly interested us was the brief period of probably less than forty years (within 2500-2460), during which Durrington Walls was the largest settlement anywhere in northwest Europe. Why did so many people come here? Where did they come from? Did they live here full time or did they come just for short stays at different seasons of the year?” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p118*

Alternative theory:

Stonehenge and Durrington Walls were two halves of the same complex. Stonehenge was the wedding ceremony center (like a church today) and Durrington Walls was the feasting and wedding celebration center where the bridal couple, their family, friends and tribe gathered, stayed for a few days, ate grilled pork, and probably drank mead after the ceremony at Stonehenge. Gatherings from all over Neolithic Britain traveled to Stonehenge /Durrington Walls to celebrate marriages.



Durrington Walls, 3km from Stonehenge

Relevant citations:

“If the stone henge and Durrington Walls were all part of one system, then what joined them together? I knew without looking at the map that the answer was the River Avon.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p10

“The radiocarbon dating results show that Durrington Walls in its various stages was in use three centuries, from 2600-2300 BC.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p117

“Stonehenge is just one point in a much larger map – which includes places to feast, perhaps to celebrate.” *If stones could speak*, Marc Aronson, p49

“All these suggest that the main period of Durrington Walls construction centered roughly about 2500 BC.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p89

“Large amounts of meat were produced in a short time, presumably to feed large gatherings of people [. . .] cooking employed a standard method, rarely seen on other sites, in which large pieces of meat were roasted on the bone.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p91

“It does not appear that the prime function of the large henge monuments, such as Durrington Walls or Coney bury was to serve as cremation cemetery.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p109

“Durrington Walls could have had several hundred houses and a population run into thousands. Its inhabitants may not have lived there permanently.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p159

“The dates for the Durrington Walls settlement, including the Western Enclosures and the Southern and Northern Circles, fall within the same broad period as those for Stonehenge Stage 2.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p97

“The analysis of multiple sections of each tooth shows that these cattle were brought directly on their hoof from their home region to Durrington Walls /Wessex.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p194

“The Stonehenge Riverside Project`s research developed out of the theory that Stonehenge and Durrington Walls were built as a single complex.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments*. Mike Parker Pearson et al. p22

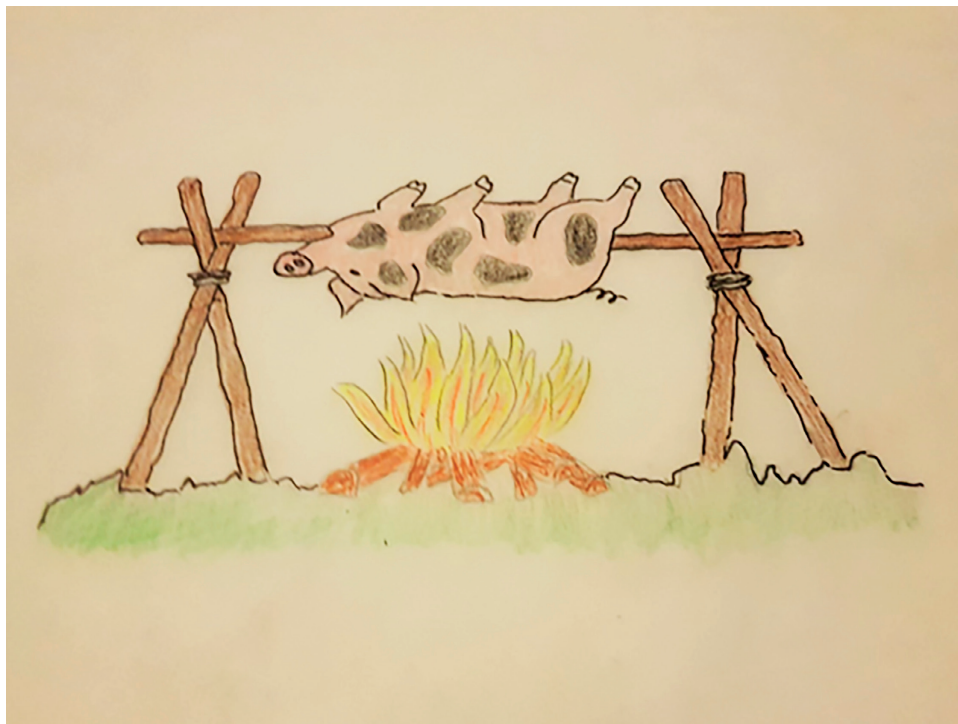
Extravagant feasting

Durrington Walls is known for wasteful consumption and feasting on a large scale. The inhabitants did not scrape bones to get every bit of meat and fat as a hungry person might do. Among the mounds of bones, many had signs of having been thrown away when only partially eaten and confirm that the area had been used for huge feasts.

Did the Grooved Ware people have an abundance of meat and was wasteful consumption the norm in Neolithic Britain?

Alternative theory:

No, it probably was not. The pigs eaten in Durrington Walls were brought to the site by the wedding assembly. The wedding ceremony and the celebration and feasting in Durrington Walls was a once in a lifetime event, and the meat leftovers were not easy to carry back to their homesteads often far away from Stonehenge/Durrington Walls.



Roasted pigs were the preferred menu

Relevant citations:

“Another surprise was the very small number of bone points for piercing and stretching animal hides (in Durrington Walls). Instead, there were bone and stone beads and lots of bone pins, several inches long and polished smooth, used to secure either clothing or hair. Clearly this was a different kind of settlement from the norm, since the everyday tool types used in daily farming life was so few.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson p66

“Pits of broken pottery, burnt flint and discarded animal bones indicated the remains of long-forgotten ceremonies, in which hundreds of people had gathered for gluttonous meals and ceremonies of death [. . .] the feasting had been prolonged and epicurean [. . .] these were gourmet banquets of early prehistory [. . .] most of the pots were Grooved ware.” *A brief history of Stonehenge*, Aubrey Burl, p224

“Huge quantities of pottery, animal bone (mainly pig and cattle), but so far with little evidence of artifacts used in the preparation of grain, leading to the suggestion that it was perhaps a feasting place, a consumer site rather than a producer site. This interpretation is further reinforced by the fact that a number of the food bones were still articulated and unfragmented, the detritus of wasteful consummation resulting from feasting” *Solving Stonehenge*, Anthony Johnson, p26

“Excavations have found so many pig bones, sometimes charred as if joints were barbecued, that archaeologists have suggested large-scale feasting occurred there” *How to build Stonehenge*, Mike Pitts, p153

“When the joints and carcasses of the animals were thrown into rubbish dumps, they still had a lot of meat on the bones – so clearly this wasn’t ‘t just cooking to assuage hunger, this was cooking for show.” *Secret Britain*, Mary-Ann Ochota, p119

“Despite the large area excavated at Stonehenge, pottery was scarce. By contrast, at the Walls Southern Circles, there was so much of it, that archeologists have imagined pots were deliberately smashed and buried” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p259

“By the Middle-Later Neolithic, feasting activities may have focused on pigs. [. . .] It can be inferred from the total number of pigs that they were used for feasting on a large scale” *Neolithic Britain and Ireland*, Caroline Malone, p43

“Some of the distinctive arrowheads found at Durrington Walls were fired at domestic swine as part of what were almost certainly major ceremonial events.” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p114

“Further study has revealed the curious fact that some of these domesticated pigs were killed by archery.” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p260

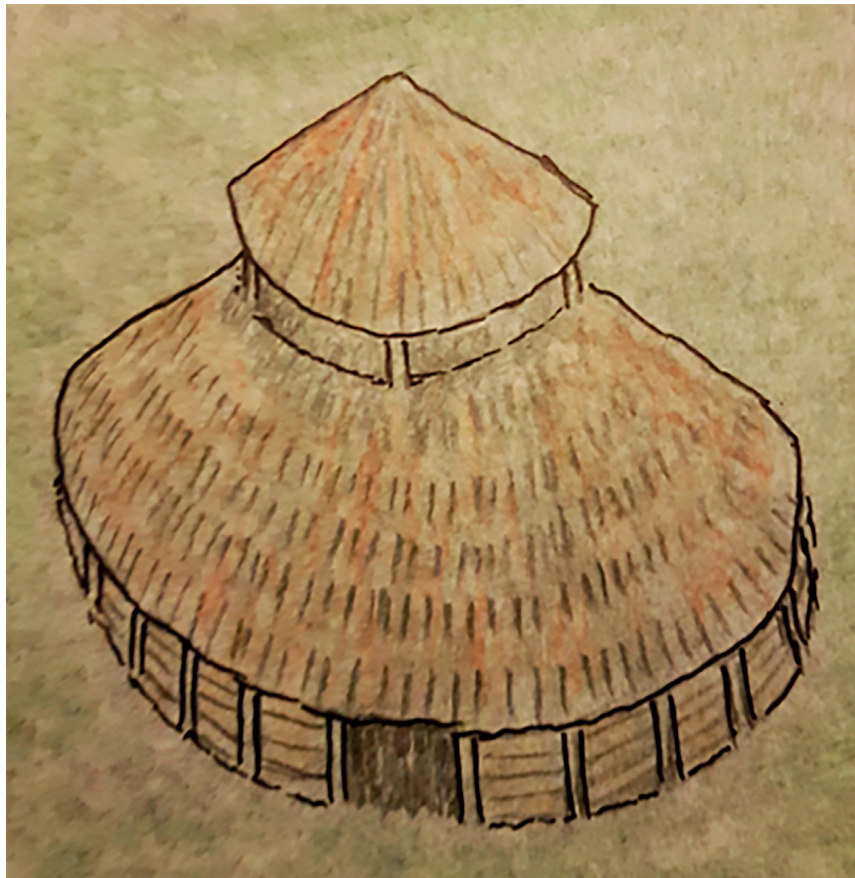
Woodhenge, Southern and Northern Circle

Inside and partly outside Durrington Walls, excavations revealed several huge timber constructions (Southern, Northern Circle and Woodhenge). These probably roofed timber halls have different diameters.

Why are there several large circular buildings in (and outside) Durrington Walls? (And probably more not yet excavated). Why do the buildings have different sizes? And why are they all associated with feasting?

Alternative theory:

The British indigenous, late Neolithic population is estimated at 100,000 - 200,000 people. This population created several bridal couples every day. Many of them were forged in the chains of hymen at Stonehenge. So, several pairs from different parts of Britain were feasting and celebrating their marriages in Durrington Walls every day, probably mostly in the summer months. That is why there was a need for several feasting arenas. Some of the wedding gatherings from close to Stonehenge had many guests (maybe hundreds of people), others from farther away were smaller. So, the different arenas were built in different sizes; Northern Circle small, Southern Circle and Woodhenge larger.



Northern Circle the way it might have looked.

Relevant citations:

“This (Southern Circle) was more like a large hall, perhaps an indoor space in which a hundred or more people could gather. The people of the Neolithic were certainly capable of constructing very big buildings.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p106

“Excavations (in Durrington Walls) exposed two similar (to Woodhenge) circular buildings both constructed over two phases, which were probably just a part of a complex of other structures within and around the huge henge. [. . .] The north circle first had a single ring of posts, replaced in its second phase by two rings of post-holes supporting a building only 14 m in diameter.” *Neolithic Britain and Ireland*, Caroline Malone, p180

“Certain forms of Grooved Ware were represented in the Northern Circle but reversed in the southern part of the site; that in the Southern Circle densities of Grooved Ware and flint tools were mutually exclusive.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p91

“The southern circle was larger, and located just inside the southern entrance to the Durrington Walls henge. [. . .] In its early phase (2850-2800 BC) the circle had four concentric rings of post holes [. . .] The later phase (from 2580-2200 BC) was larger and replaced the first structure with six concentric rings of posts. The building had a central hearth, another hearth outside the entrance and a midden on the north-east side which suggests that feasting was one of the activities enjoyed within.” *Neolithic Britain and Ireland*, Caroline Malone, p180

“The southern roundhouse at first consisted of posts arranged in four concentric rings, the largest being 23 meters across. When this structure decayed it was replaced by a six-ring building 39 meters in diameter. This very large building is thought to have been covered by a thatched timber-framed conical roof. [. . .] The interior must also have had something of the atmosphere of a circus tent.” *The Stonehenge people An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC*, Rodney Castleden, p40

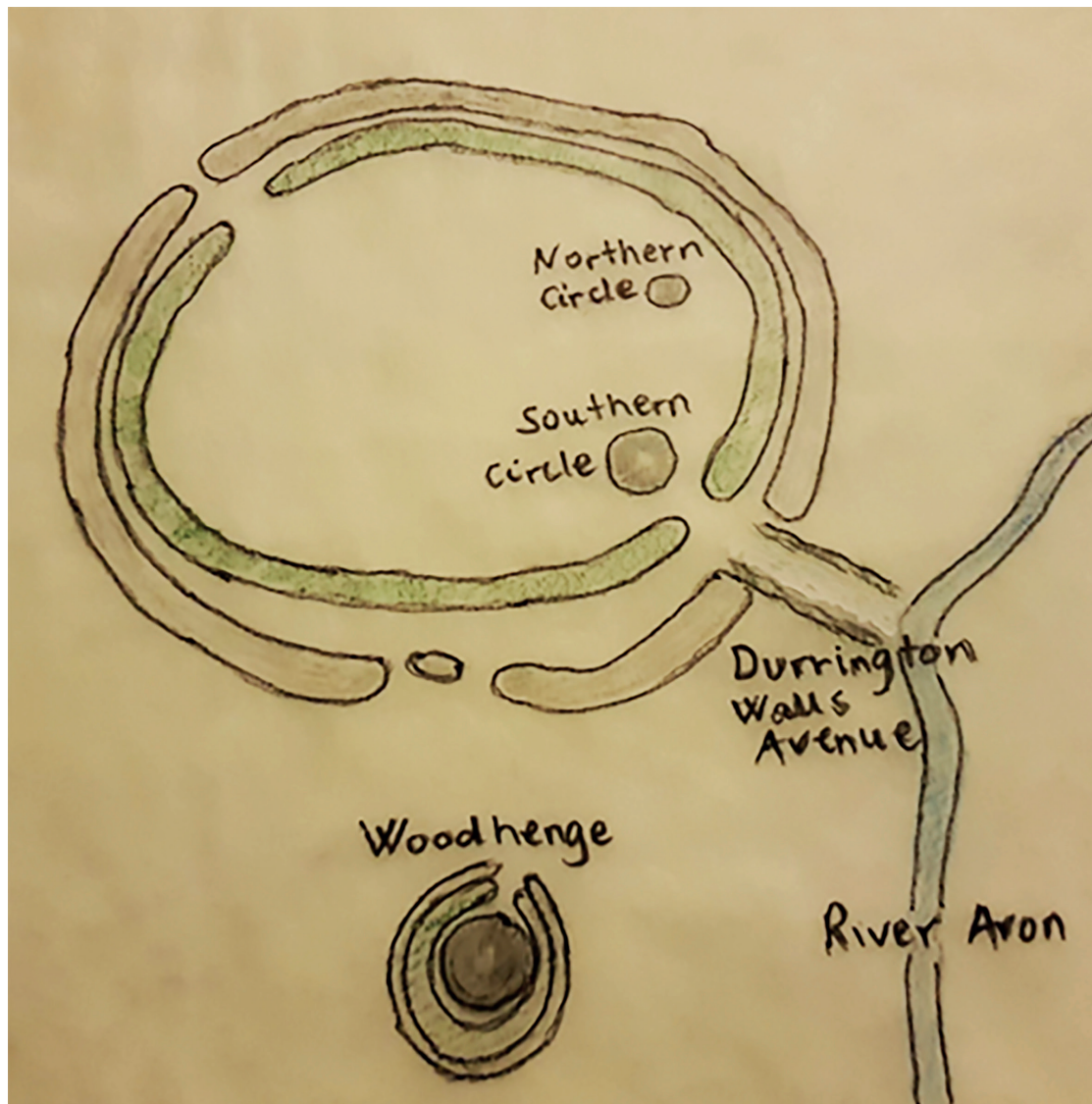
“The excavator separated posts of the Southern Circles at Durrington Walls into two phases. He imagined each was a roofed building similar to Woodhenge.” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p60

“Outside the Southern Circle ‘s entrance, the 1967 excavations located a gravel and chalk platform on which pigs were roasted.” *Materializing Stonehenge The Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries*, *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol.11(1/2) 227-261

“Aerial photographs and later geophysical survey suggested that at least four additional settings exist beyond the excavated strip within the area enclosed by the ditch.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p87

Durrington Walls Avenue

Durrington Walls Avenue (excavated in 2005) was a c 100-meter-long and 15-meter-wide roadway, constructed from hard-packed, natural, broken flint, leading from Durrington Walls to the River Avon. The 15-meter-wide road shows the importance of a route to the Avon and it gives an insight into the huge crowds walking between Durrington Walls and the River Avon 4500 years ago.



Durrington Walls Avenue

Relevant citations:

“In 2005 a new (100 m long) avenue was discovered, leading from the east entrance of Durrington Walls to the river Avon. Half of the avenue ‘s width was excavated in 2005, allowing us to estimate that the road surface was originally about 10 m wide and, with a gully and bank on each side, the avenue would have been over 20 m across. The central road was resurfaced at least twice with rammed layers of small broken flint cobbles. As such, it is one of the earliest “Metaled” road surfaces in the world” *Materializing Stonehenge the Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries Journal of Material Culture, Vol.11(1/2) 227-261*

“Its 90-m long and 20-m wide flint-cobbled roadway leading (from Durrington Walls) to the bank of The Avon.” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p27*

“Our theory was right there was an avenue running from Durrington Walls to the river [. . .] The Neolithic Road surface was constructed from hard-packed, natural, broken flint [. . .] the flint road surface was 15 meters wide and, in its entirety, the avenue was 30meters across from the outer edges of its parallel banks.” *Stonehenge A new understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p77*

“This large house beside the Durrington avenue. [. . .] Colin had studied exactly the same arrangement in Neolithic houses in Orkney” *Stonehenge A new understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p97*

“In 2004 excavation revealed a central roadway to River Avon, its 15m wide surface “metaled” with small flint cobbles, and flanked on either side by a gully and an external bank. This surface roadway, claimed to be the earliest in Europe.” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p157*

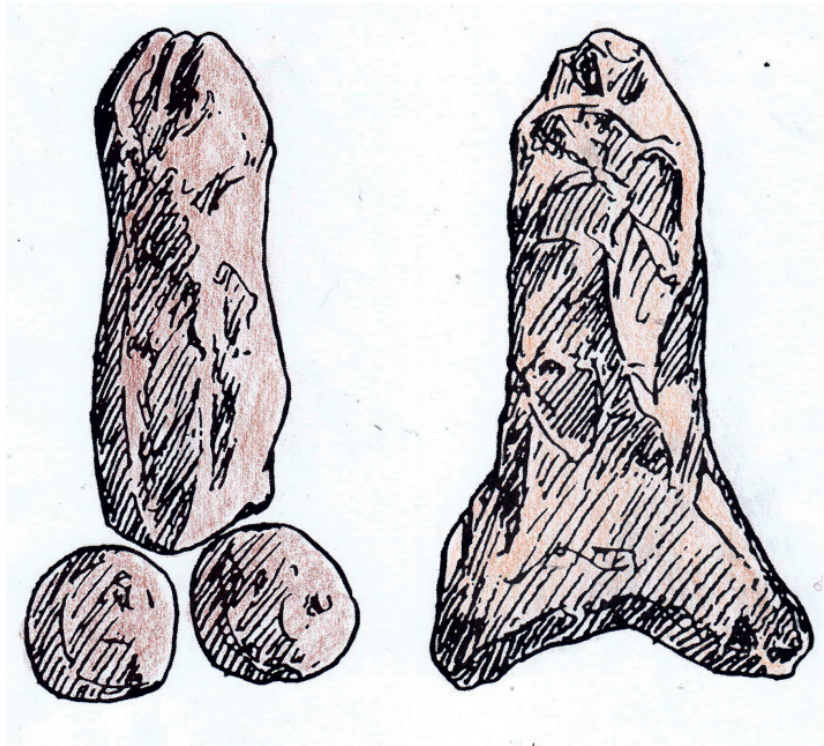
The Durrington Dong

Phallus-shaped flint stones were often found in the Durrington Walls excavations, giving rise to the nickname “The Durrington Dong” among the excavators in the team.

Why so many phallus-shaped stones?

Alternative theory:

Young couples, marriage and sex have always been associated. Bride gifts were probably practiced in the Stone Age too, and some cheeky guests probably gave phallus-like stones to the bridal couple. The brides probably did not like the jokes and threw the phallus stones in the rubbish with pig bones and broken pottery. Here archaeologists found them 4500 years later.



Phallus-shaped stones were often found in the Durrington excavations. The testicle-sized, natural flint balls in the picture lay in close proximity to the phallic objects according to Mike Parker Pearson.

Relevant citations:

“Our Durrington Walls phallus was a natural nodule whose glans was formed by a fossil shell [. . .] this phallic object lay near one end of a narrow Neolithic pit, in close proximity to two testicle-sized, natural flint balls [. . .] perhaps we had uncovered a prehistoric sex education lesson [. . .] back on the campsite our find soon took on the nickname of the “Durrington Dong”. *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p68*

“In 2003 one pit was found to contain four phallic-shaped flints and two spherical flint nodules. [. . .] The sexual symbolism of the phalli and balls were not lost on the excavators. Many more were found in the extensive excavations of 2005 – chalk phalli, testicles, cups as representations of vulvae, incised plaques as female figurines. [. . .] The people of Durrington Walls had need of as much fertility magic as they could conjure, and as the director of the excavation, Mike Parker Pearson, observed, sex is often associated both with life and with death.” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p224*

Pigs were slaughtered at 9 months old

The pigs eaten at Durrington Walls were all around 9 months old. This age was probably chosen because it was an optimal age in the breeding economy (older pigs eat too much relative to their weight gain) and younger pigs have more tasty meat. In a modern pig farm today, pigs are usually slaughtered at 6-7 months. Many archaeologists commenting on the Durrington Walls pigs write:

“The pigs were typically about nine-month-old when they died; since pigs give birth in the spring, they must have been cooked and eaten at midwinter.” *If stones could speak, Marc Aronson, p41*

Is this statement correct?

Alternative theory:

All (or at least most) domesticated sows today breed twice a year. They come in estrus when the piglets are separated from the sow usually after being suckled for 15-16 weeks, and piglets are born all year around. In warmer climates, wild boars also breed all year around. In temperate regions, wild boars usually breed in spring, but they have an adaptable breeding biology and might breed all year around if enough nutritional resources are available.

300,000 wild boars live in Sweden. 85% of these animals breed in spring (between February and May). The rest (15%) mostly breed in August, September (source: Swedish Hunter Syndicate). If the sow loses her piglets in the spring (they could be taken by wolves, bears or foxes), she will come in estrus, mate and then breed her second litter in the autumn. Pigs are omnivores and might eat all the leftovers from humans or they might have their nutrition need fulfilled with only eating roots and acorns.

The pigs eaten in Durrington Walls probably had their ancestry from domesticated wild boar in South Europe or the Middle East several millennia before 2500 BC, and most likely the Neolithic farmers in Britain could overrule the breeding season of these sows. If they wanted the sow to have piglets in September, give her access to the hog in May or take the newborn piglets away from her in April and she will have a new litter in September giving 9-month-old pigs ready for the barbecue (and a wedding ceremony) in June the following summer.

Relevant citations:

“Most of the young pigs were killed at around nine months old. [. . .] Pigs farrowed only once a year (during the spring) - therefore killed in midwinter.” *Stonehenge A new understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p119

“Many of the pigs were around nine months old when they were slaughtered, which suggests a spring birth and slaughter in December. They also had abnormally decayed teeth, which suggests they were being fed sweet diet, perhaps to make their flesh tastier.” *Secret Britain*, Mary-Ann Ochota, p115

“The pig teeth came from domestic animals thought to have been born in the spring, nine months before winter slaughter.” *Solving Stonehenge*, Anthony Johnson, p26

“Most of the bones were of domestic pigs. The vast majority were killed between mandibular wear stages 8 and 12, around 9 month old. In these northern latitudes it is most likely that pigs farrowed only once a year, probably in spring, placing the time of their slaughter in the midwinter period.” *Materializing Stonehenge The Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries*, *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol.11(1/2) 227-261

“The pig-culling tells us that people were here, feasting on pork, at midwinter – most likely around the mid-winter solstice.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p126

“The age of the young pigs at slaughter, averaging around nine months, has been suggested as indicating a mid-winter cull – perhaps for barbecues to celebrate the winter solstice, with a minor peak around mid-summer. However, this depends on all the pigs born in spring, whereas sows will generally produce young at various times of the year. So maybe the only consistent feature is that nine months was seen as the optimum age for slaughter and consumption.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p161

Animals from all over Britain

The animals eaten in Durrington Walls (mostly pigs, but also cows and sheep) were brought to the site from all over Britain.

Why were they not reared in the neighborhood of Durrington Walls?

Alternative theory:

The wedding gatherings brought their own food from their homesteads. That was the most reliable way of organizing the wedding celebration 4500 years ago. A pig or two was probably tied to a string and walked on its own feet all the way to the Durrington barbecue. On river stretches where boats were available the pig's feet were probably tied together and the animal would lie in the bottom of the canoe or hide boat.



Relevant citations:

“A study of strontium isotopes in cattle and pig tooth enamel demonstrates that the animals whose remains are found at Durrington Walls had travelled long distances, being brought there from many different parts of southern Britain” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p99*

“This was not a village where farmers raised animals to eat as needed. Rather it was a special place where people from a wide area gathered to feast, a place of the living – where people held celebrations. But what did they celebrate?” *If stones could speak, Marc Aronson, p41*

“The isotopes from some cattle bones suggest that animals may have been driven to Durrington from some considerable distance, even as far as Scotland.” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p161*

“There wasn’t a single wild pig among the 1967 bones from Durrington Walls – all were domesticated. None of the animals was very young – no piglets and no calves. This absence of newborn can only mean there was no year-round stock-breeding at Durrington Walls. This was a “consumption site” a place for eating but not for raising animals. Some were reared in the far west, either in Devon and Cornwall, or in Wales. The others were from the lowlands, either west of Wessex or to its east.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p119/120*

“The animals came from at least 30 miles away and some were brought from 70 miles away.” *If stones could speak, Marc Aronson, p41*

“The isotopic results (from cattle) demonstrate that groups from many different regions of Britain gathered together in a way which suggests that unity of purpose was a driving force. We might thus consider Stonehenge stage 2 to have been an attempt at an island-wide level to resolve conflict, create unity and assuage the cultural and ethnic tensions now in play as result of large-scale migration within mainland Europe, now impinging on Britain’s long-maintained isolation.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p195*

“Most of the evidence for early farming is not based on grain but on stock rearing, and especially on cattle. Pastoral economies favored farmsteads spread across the landscape, where each unit had grazing land and water.” *Neolithic Britain and Ireland, Caroline Malone, p46*

“The genuinely big difference between the two ways of living undoubtedly lies in the number of people that can be supported on any given area of land. The carrying capacity of farmed land is vastly greater than most land that is traditionally hunted.” *Farmers in prehistoric Britain, Francis Pryor, p31*

Calendar and time planner

When people plan their wedding today, they book a fixed time in the church several months in advance, and they hire a celebration location nearby often for the same evening.

Was it the same in Neolithic Britain?

Alternative theory:

No, there was probably no prebooking for Stonehenge and Durrington Walls (telephones were not available). When marriage was decided, the bridal couple and travel companions gathered and they started what was often a long journey to Stonehenge. On arriving, they were lodged in some of the many small houses in Durrington Walls, and first then they pulled a ticket for the marriage ceremony in Stonehenge. Hopefully, there were not too many other bridal couples waiting. If there were, the shaman in Stonehenge had to work overtime and get as many bridal couples as possible through the ceremony before dark. This made Durrington Walls overloaded with people on some occasions and it is the reason why Durrington avenue had to be 15 meters wide and Durrington Walls was the greatest Neolithic gathering place in Northern Europe. Besides the huge timber constructions (Northern Circle, Southern Circle and Woodhenge) it is estimated that Durrington Walls was a settlement with 1000 small houses.



WDG Photo/Shutterstock/NTB

Measuring just 5x5 meters, the Durrington Walls small houses are a perfect size for a nuclear family.

Relevant citations:

“The idea that Durrington Walls and Stonehenge formed two halves of a single complex is further supported by the new and revised radiocarbon dated for these monuments. [. . .] Whether Durrington Walls was the Stonehenge builders camp cannot be proven beyond doubt but it is currently the only candidate.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p102*

“Durrington Walls had once been a huge settlement of 42 acres, filled with small, square houses whose surroundings were clogged with Neolithic trash from feasts that must have involved thousands of people [. . .] and most of its inhabitants were probably seasonal visitors and not permanent residents.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p92*

“Durrington Walls – the area enclosed by the henge bank and ditch could have accommodated a massive settlement of up to 1000 dwellings.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p98*

“Durrington Walls, this was a place that would have changed, perhaps on a daily basis. People arrived from far away, driving their pigs and cattle, meats for feasts arriving on hoof, some from far to the north.” *English Heritage Stonehenge Guidebook, p21*

“The houses at Durrington walls may not have been a permanent home. It is suggested that only part of the year, perhaps the time around the summer and winter solstices, was spent by the banks of the River Avon.” *English Heritage Stonehenge Guidebook, p21*

“There`s plenty of evidence that Neolithic Britain was a place of busy trade routes, with people and objects traveling long distances.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p275*

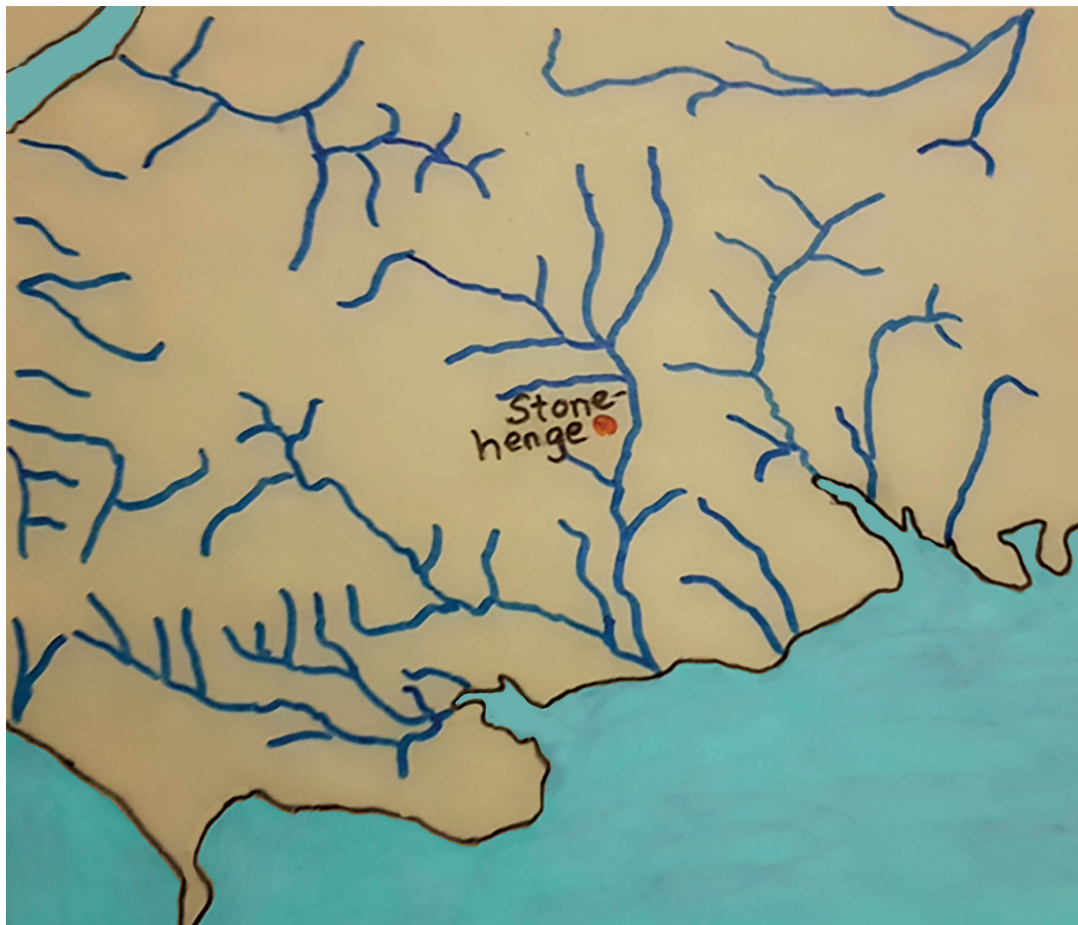
Communal labor and property

Stonehenge, Durrington Walls, Avebury, the Sanctuary etc. were probably communal property built by millions of working hours with communal labor, and when finished had free access for the whole community. Rivers linked the different monuments in Britain together and canoes and hide boats were the optimal equipment for traveling far. Today we may assume that every family, every travel companion would own their own canoes and hide boats.

Was that the case in Neolithic Britain?

Alternative theory:

Canoes and hide boats could have been communal property in the Grooved Ware culture (like Stonehenge, Durrington Walls, Avebury etc.). Boats could have been positioned at specified beginning and end stations along the rivers, and land routes would have connected the rivers together. Communal boats lying on the riverbanks would have made the journey to Stonehenge far easier compared with private boats that had to be dragged over land from river to river. The boats could be used over and over again and were designed for the river stretch they were assigned to - like buses and trains today.



Rivers in the southern part of Britain.

Relevant citations:

“People have often visualized Stonehenge as a center for an area far larger than the immediate clan territory. It is tempting to see either Stonehenge or Avebury as a sort of national capital.” *The Stonehenge people An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC*, Rodney Castleden, p210

“The Stonehenge area is known to have included some fifteen long barrows. These earliest tombs of the Neolithic were communal.” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape*, Francis Pryor, p57-58

«While agriculture allowed for the possibility of more unequal concentrations of wealth, in most cases this only began to happen millennia after its inception” *The Dawn of everything*, David Graeber

“Stonehenge`s stage 2 required the cooperation of a large workforce with a collective purpose. Secondarily, the circular architecture materialized a sense of community in which all positions around the perimeter stood in equal or democratic relationship.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p196

“Neolithic Europe was inhabited by people much like those who raised Stonehenge. They were farmers with an urge to work together and build large stone structures. “It looks like these people were quite communal” says professor Kristian Kristiansen.” *Story of the most murderous people of all time revealed in ancient DNA*, Kristian Kristiansen, *New Scientist*, 27march 2019

“The construction of the first Stonehenge earthwork enclosure was clearly a communal effort and it is possible that individual sections of the ditch were dug by different groups of people.” *English Heritage Stonehenge Guidebook*, p33

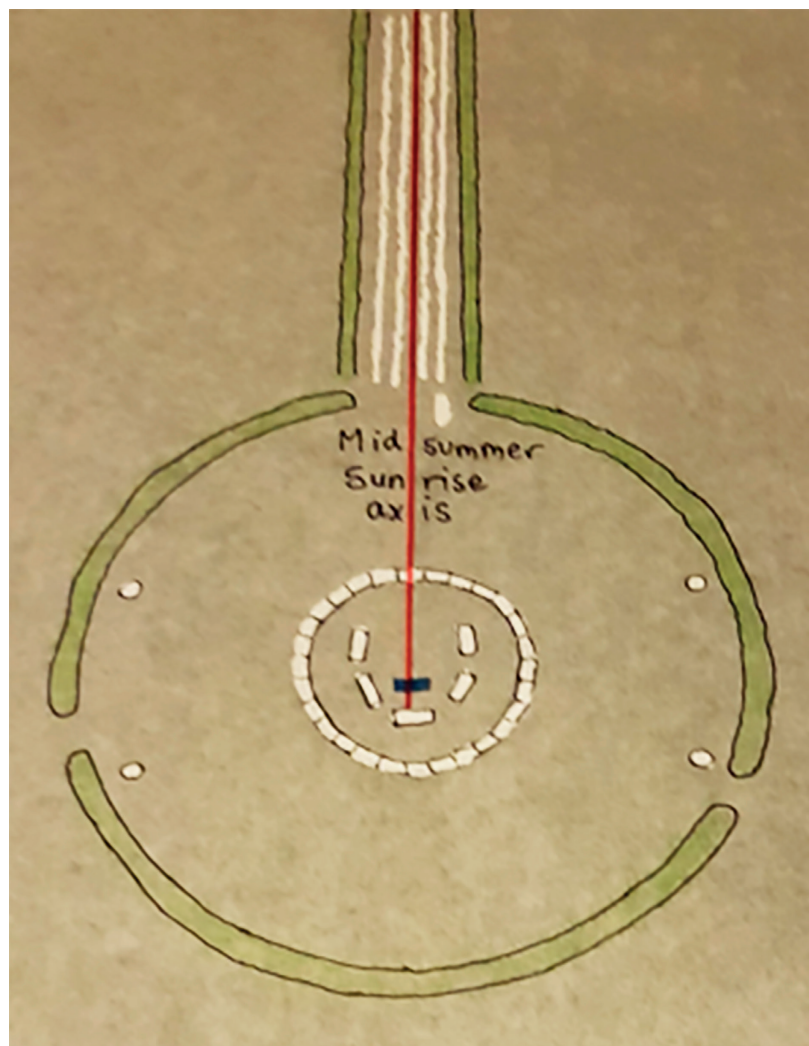
“Recent studies of ancient DNA from skeletons of central Europe `s earliest farmers (7,500-7,000 years ago) have shown that only a few of these people had ancestors from the Middle East. [. . .] Local hunter-gatherers took up the farming way of life.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p19

“The builders of Stonehenge lived a far less oppressive existence. They were doing something they believed in, and we will learn that their lifestyle was more appropriate to a pilgrim than an underpaid workman.” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape*, Francis Pryor p116

The solstice axis

On the longest day of the year, 21st June, the sun rises on the horizon behind Stonehenge Avenue and its first rays shine on the Great Trilithon and the Altar Stone. The sunset at the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, takes place on exactly the opposite side of the horizon from the midsummer sunrise. Many archeologists believe that Stonehenge was built (at least partly) to celebrate summer and/or winter solstices.

I do believe the main reason for the construction of Stonehenge was marriage with a great emphasis on egalitarian and monogamic lifestyle, which was being challenged by the invading, polygamous Bell Beakers. In addition, having a wedding ceremony in Stonehenge when the sun rises on the longest day in June surely would have been a romantic start for a young pair in love.



Midsummer sunrise axis

Relevant citations:

“Stonehenge was built on the end of a geological feature coincidentally aligned on the solstice axis. [. . .] Prehistoric people adapted pre-existing natural features into their cultural designs. The most significant of these is the series of three chalk ridges aligned by geological accident on the midsummer sunrise/midwinter sunset axis. On top of these, Neolithic people constructed the first stretch of the Stonehenge Avenue. [. . .] It’s interesting that no certain solstitial alignment have been identified at the other great henges of Wessex, such as Avebury, Marden, or Dorchester.” *Stonehenge A new understanding, Mike Parker Pearson, p339-341-342*

“The final 500m of the Avenue is precisely the same as the direction of midsummer sunrise and midwinter solstice; the longest and the shortest day of the year. Chalk at the bottom of the trench had been fissured by a number of close parallel-running ridges. The ridges were entirely natural, the result of erosion when the glacial ice sheets had begun to melt. It just so happened that this gully was precisely aligned on the solstice” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape, Francis Prior p37-38*

“But what is exceptional here is that this particular natural feature by sheer coincident, is aligned on the solstice axis. There is absolutely no doubt that the builders of Stonehenge were aware of the presence of this geological formation. [. . .] The natural ridges would have formed what anthropologists call an axis mundi, an axis or center of the world.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding Mike Parker Pearson p244-245*

“Whatever astronomical function it had was probably only part of its overall purpose.” *A brief history of Stonehenge, Aubrey Burl, p221*

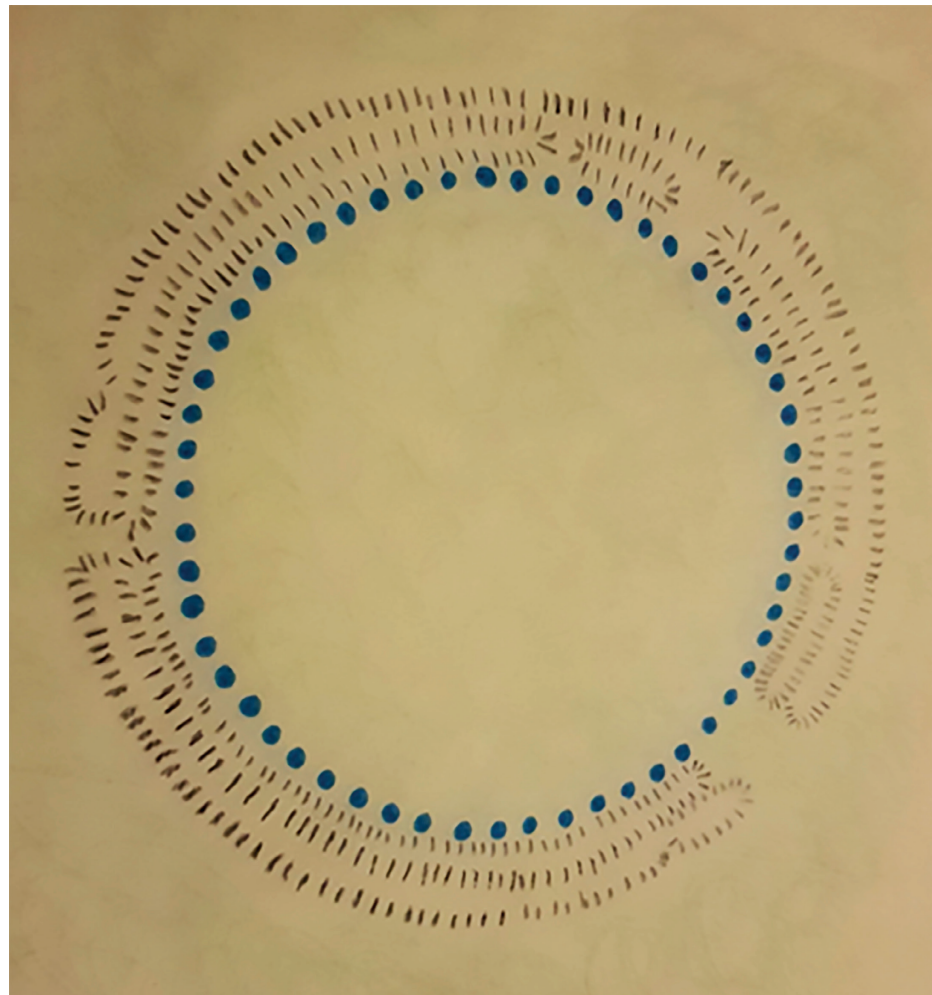
“One of the very real problems that archaeologists have with astronomical interpretations of Stonehenge or other prehistoric monuments is that there always appears to be something in the heavens that will align with just about anything else on the ground, if the spectator stands in the right place.” *Solving Stonehenge, Anthony Johnson, p177*

“In 1997 Professor Clive Ruggles stated: Despite persistent popular belief, there is no convincing evidence that, at any stage, constructions at Stonehenge deliberately incorporated a great many precise astronomical alignments, or that they served as any sort of computing device to predict eclipses.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p191*

“The Avebury complex, just 18 miles to the north, has not a single solstice orientation.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p74*

A cemetery monument

Many archaeologists believe that Stonehenge was a cemetery monument, based partly on the many cremated bones found in the Aubrey holes. These 56 holes just inside Stonehenge ditch and bank were dug around 3000 BC and cremated bones buried in the holes are dated to the second half of the fourth and the first half of the third millennium BC. None of the cremated bones fit with the erection of the sarsen Stonehenge around 2500 BC. If Stonehenge was a cemetery monument, how was the funeral ceremony practiced inside the Stonehenge monument? Why are the Trilithons, the Altar Stone, the Sarsen circle and the Bluestones positioned the way they are? What about the extravagant feasting in Durrington Walls how does that fit with Stonehenge being a cemetery monument? Where are the cremation ashes and where are the fireplaces used for cremations? There are too many loose pieces in this picture. Stonehenge might have been a cemetery around 3000 BC but the later phases, Bluehenge and sarsen Stonehenge, fit far better in the wedding ceremony theory.



Bluestones probably were erected in the Aubrey holes (blue spots) around 3000 BC and caches from cremations were deposited probably beside the stones.

Relevant citations:

“Burial activity started at Stonehenge in 3070-2945 cal BC (95% probability) and ended in 2860-2755 cal BC (95% probability).” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments*, Mike Parker Pearson et. al p539

“After five centuries of cremation ceremonies, burial does not appear to continue when the new monument is built, suggesting a linked change in rituals or in the meaning of the site.” *How to build Stonehenge*, Mike Pitts, p155

“Put quite simply, it is not possible to be living at Durrington Walls (around 2500BC), make the journey to Stonehenge via the Avenue, and for your cremated remains to be buried at Stonehenge where the majority of the burials date to before 2600BC.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p253

“Many deposits of cremated human bone have been found during excavations, in the partly filled ditch, as well as in Aubrey Holes. They are evidence that, very early in its development, Stonehenge was a cemetery.” *English Heritage Stonehenge Guidebook*, p33

“Our excavations at Durrington Walls uncovered just three loose human bones and a single tooth. [. . .] Between 3000 BC and the building of the first-round barrows around 2400 BC, there is almost no trace of the dead outside Stonehenge itself.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p196

“This area closely encircling Stonehenge was deliberately avoided both by Neolithic and Copper Age inhabitants of the area, as well as by the Early Bronze Age builders of the round barrows.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p233

“The insertion of burials and cremated remains in and around earlier cult sites was clearly a tradition, and absolute and traditional dating usually demonstrate a time lapse of centuries between structure and later burial.” *Neolithic Britain and Ireland*, Caroline Malone, p197

Grooved Ware people

The indigenous, monolith builders living in Britain between 3200 – 2200 BC used pottery with grooves called Grooved Ware. The origin of the ware seems to be Orkney, but Grooved Ware pottery was later found in Ireland, Wales and all over Britain. These people were farmers, reared livestock and had an egalitarian and probably strong monogamic culture. They had the ability to mobilize huge troops with communal labor, and many of the monuments and great henges built by the Grooved Ware people probably were communal property with open access for the whole community. The Grooved Ware people cremated their dead and very few remains from the burned ashes are found, and if found there is very little equipment associated with the ashes of the dead.



White spots are Grooved Ware settlements in Neolithic Britain.

Relevant citations:

“The Neolithic pottery found at Durrington Walls has grooves, so it is called Grooved Ware. [. . .] Grooved Ware was a style of Late Neolithic pottery used throughout Britain in 2800-2200BCE, probably originated in Orkney around 3200 BCE.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p54

“The new pottery was Grooved ware, with its flat-bottomed pots with external decoration. The new funerary practice involved cremation. Houses were now small and square rather than rectangular, and almost identical in form from Wessex to Orkney to Wales.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p330

“Maceheads were vital to the cult. They were often made of attractive stone or gleaming antler [. . .] the excellent quality of many of them suggest they were the products of a specialized craftsman or a small number of skilled workers” *A brief history of Stonehenge*, Aubrey Burl, p177

“Grooved Ware is not often found in tombs, but frequently occurs at ceremonial timber circles and in the ditches and pits of the great henges, such as Durrington Walls near Stonehenge” *Britain BC Life in Britain and Ireland before the Romans*, Francis Pryor, p234.

“Pottery decoration is a powerful way to express identity and to distinguish self from other.” *Britain begins*, Barry Cunliffe, p175

“The post holes and ditch at the Walls were full of pottery, bones, flintwork, yet at Avebury excavations have revealed few finds. By contrast, at the West Kennet enclosures is the largest group of Grooved Ware pottery from the district.” *Hengeworld*, Mike Pitts, p283

“The Grooved ware, a new decorative tradition, started in about 2900 BC. [. . .] It is one of the strangest features of the British neolithic that the same type of pottery is found in Orkney and in Wessex. [. . .] The origin of the ware seems to be Orkney” *The Stonehenge people An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC*, Rodney Castleden, p85

“The users of Grooved Ware were responsible for the construction of the main enclosure at Durrington Walls, documented by the extensive collection of Grooved Ware recovered from the primary silts of the ditch.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p8

Bell Beaker people

From around 2500 BC a new style of pottery emerges in Britain – the Bell Beaker pots. The people using this pottery style were immigrants to Britain originally from the Pontic steppe east of the Black Sea (the Yamnaya culture). These people were semi-mobile, cattle pastoralists, often moving long distances with their herds. They produced metal objects (copper, gold and later bronze). They invented novelties in weaponry (barbed-and-tanged arrowheads, stone wrist guards, arrow-shaft smoothers, daggers and stone battle-axe heads). They invented new funerary traditions with a switch away from cremation to inhumation beneath a round barrow in a single grave and had no tradition of large-scale monument building. They caused a switch from an egalitarian, monogamic culture with communal labor and communal property to private, family-owned assets in a hierarchical community with much greater emphasis on individual wealth, status and power and probably an extensive polygamic breeding strategy. Horse bones are associated with Beaker sites in Europe, and the first horse riding together with the first wheel in Britain probably occurred in the Beaker period. Some Beaker pots in Europe and Britain, were used for alcoholic drinks, others contained dairy products. They were living in a male-oriented, pugnacious world where archery, warfare symbolism and professional warriors had an extensive influence.



Bell Beaker pot, barbed-and-tanged arrowheads and a stone wrist guard

Relevant citations:

“The biggest event after 2470 BC was the arrival of the Beaker people, and the gradual increase in their numbers. [. . .] Beaker people introduced alcohol to Britain, although it was probably already widely in use in the form of beer and possible cider. [. . .] They had no traditions of large-scale monument building, [. . .] they were semi-mobile cattle pastoralists.” *Stonehenge A New Understanding*, Mike Parker Pearson, p344-345

“Beaker burials signal a much greater emphasis on the importance of the individual and the ownership of valuable possessions.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p150

“Horse bones are associated with Beaker sites from Moravia to Ireland, and from Spain to the Netherlands.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p173

“Status and hierarchy were prominent in many Beaker burials. [. . .] Unlike the collective burial rites of the earlier Mesolithic, the Copper Age Beaker people appear to have celebrated the status of just one (invariable male) individual.” *Neolithic Britain and Ireland*, Caroline Malone, p258

“Cranial measurements were suggesting that the Beaker people were more round-headed than the indigenous people buried in the Neolithic long barrows.” *Britain begins*, Barry Cunliffe, p208

“During the 3de millennium BC warfare symbolism became extremely important in the representation of social power, status and gender categories. [. . .] Archery became decisively important in the symbolic expression of warfare during the Bell Beaker period.” *The Bell Beaker transition in Europe mobility and local evolution during the 3de millennium BC*, Maria Martinez et al. p28

“Beaker pottery, such as storage vessels, occurs almost everywhere in spatial relation to salt processing areas, we argue that the presence of Beaker pottery in these sites may be explained as a way to claim property rights over the most profitable activities.” *The Bell Beaker transition in Europe mobility and local evolution during the 3de millennium BC*, Maria Martinez et al. p169

“Interestingly Beaker people do not seem to have had any greater tolerance of lactose.” *The Beaker people*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p13

“The decline in levels of pollen-inferred deciduous woodland during the Beaker period was the most dramatic yet experienced by Britain`s prehistoric population.” *The Beaker people*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p91

Primate breeding strategies

The normal male animal behavior is to fight each other for access to females. How should males achieve the big advantage of being a cooperating team without it ending in internal fighting for mating opportunities? Primate species solved the problem in different ways.

Gorillas live strictly polygynous; one silverback has a harem of 3-6 females. Male gorillas compensated for the absence of male teamwork by evolving huge body and muscles.

Chimpanzees are promiscuous. To lower the tension between tribal males and to protect offspring against infanticide, females mate with all males in the tribe. Chimpanzees compensated for the lack of male physical competition for females by evolving huge balls and sperm production.

During the long period humans lived as hunters and gatherers, egalitarian and often monogamic cultures evolved. Monogamic lifestyle was the glue that kept the tension low and the fellowship high among tribe members. Chimps solved the issue with promiscuous females. Human hunters and gatherers solved it (mostly) by sharing the females equally. One man for each female and one female for each man.

When agriculture was introduced in the Neolithic period, stratified societies emerged with wealth and power concentrated on fewer people (most often men), which in turn made polygyny more common.

Hierarchical, stratified, patriarchal, patrilocal, warlike, wealthy communities had a tendency of sliding back into extensive polygyny.

In many ways, the situation in Neolithic Britain where the Grooved Ware people combined a livestock-breeding society with an egalitarian and communalistic organized community was unique. They brought a Mesolithic hunter-gatherer way of living with them into the farming and livestock society of the Neolithic. A charming combination, but unfortunately it was not viable. The Grooved Ware people's communalistic community became too vulnerable when the hierarchical, warlike Bell Beakers arrived on the British coasts.

Relevant citations:

“Goodall describes the ordeal of Flo, the most popular chimp female, who was left battered and bleeding after mating with every member of the troop, over and over, for more than a week. By mating with every male member of the group, females give each reason to think that he might be the father. They confuse paternity and offspring are protected against infanticide.” *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p35*

“The adoption of social monogamy by early hominids created something unique in nature – a society where males cooperate at common tasks with a minimum of sexual competition. *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p5*

“Human beings are the only species in nature where males work together in the context of social monogamy. That is what makes us unique. It makes us human.” *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p47*

“One of the things we will learn from human history is how easy it is for human societies, large and small, to slip back into polygamy, even after monogamy has been established.” *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p50*

“Social hierarchies became possible only with a growth in economic production, which seems linked with the agricultural revolution (8000 to 2000 BC). The expanded wealth made possible by agriculture allowed the men who controlled the largest shares to claim more wives, sire more offspring, and produce larger kindreds.” *The Triumph of Monogamy David Herlihy, The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Spring, 1995, Vol 25, No.4*

“The Neolithic package was spread across the varied landscapes of Britain and Ireland in the period 4100-3800 BC, leading to the equally rapid demise of the indigenous hunter-gatherer lifestyle [. . .] the indigenous hunter – gatherer populations of Britain and Ireland became Neolithic” *Britain begins, Barry Cunliffe, p134*

“Most current hunter-gatherer human societies are monogamous (although with adultery relatively common) [. . .] With a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, it is almost impossible for one man to obtain a monopoly of resources.” *The myth of monogamy, David Barash, p136*

“Australian Aborigines are traditionally considered to live in egalitarian social systems in which no adult controls any other adult, lacking the “big men” characteristic of the area. Many aboriginal groups nonetheless practice polygyny.” *Polygamy A Cross – Cultural analyses, Miriam Koktvedgaard Zeitzen, p49*

Western-style monogamy

In the western and most of the eastern world today monogamy is instituted by law. Most of the world's GDP today is produced in countries that practice monogamy. Probably because it creates communities where people cooperate at common tasks with a minimum of sexual competition. Monogamy may have spared Europe the disturbances that large numbers of men without mates could provoke, as well as the destructive competition of numerous sons fighting to succeed their father and claim family property. The pairing of monogamy with social inequality might though be unique to the modern world. Our emphasis on private property, initiative, competition and reward given to the superior performance could have been a winning strategy because it creates huge production capacity and wealth, just like monogamy.



Relevant citations:

“According to today ‘s anthropological textbooks, people living in advanced civilizations have more in common with hunter-gatherers in term of marriage customs than we do with people living in the in-between stages. Both we and the hunter-gatherers practice monogamy while the people in between – practice polygamy.” *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p64*

“The world is clearly monogamous, and most societies that historically permitted some form of polygyny, like China, have now adopted monogamy.” *Does Monogamy work, Luke Brunning, p25*

“The new Western social system was founded upon a paradoxical combination of principles, sexual equality and social inequality.” *The Triumph of Monogamy David Herlihy, The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Spring,1995, Vol 25, No.4*

“The great cultures of East and West (today) reestablished hunter-gatherer monogamy and used it to build civilizations that grew beyond the wildest dreams of tribal societies.” *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p84*

“What the Greek tragedies tell us is that powerful passions lie within the tightly knit monogamous family. For the first time since the last hunter-and-gatherers, the egalitarianism of the original human society has been restored.” *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p118*

“The Athenians were the first known urban society in which an alpha male was not allowed to take more than one wife, and was shamed if he divorced. They were also the world ‘s first democratic society” *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p111*

«Marriage has become the fault line dividing American classes. The rule is: those who form traditional families succeed; those who don ‘t fail.” *Marriage and civilization, William Tucker, p4*

“Given the large and often staggering disparities in wealth in many highly developed countries, it is somewhat of a mystery that monogamy has emerged almost universally in the marriage market of advanced economies.” *The Mystery of Monogamy, Eric D Gould et al. The Hebrew University, December 2004*

“According to state laws a Chinese man can only be married to one wife” *Polygamy A Cross – Cultural analyses, Miriam Koltvedgaard Zeitzen, p5*

“One of the attractive things about monogamy is its egalitarianism: one male, one female, everyone equal” *The myth of monogamy, David Barash, p127*

Polygamous Bell Beakers

The Bell Beaker community in the late Neolithic period and Bronze Age Britain had all the signs that characterize a polygamic culture. They were living in hierarchical, stratified, patriarchal, patrilocal, warlike and wealthy, pastoral communities like so many other polygamic human societies.

When a polygamic culture fuses with a monogamic, it is a big threat to the monogamic people, especially when the polygamic people are warriors and focus on individual wealth and the monogamous indigenous people are egalitarian with the focus on communal labor. In a polygamic culture, where some men take several wives, this practice creates a shortage of women. Wealthy older men often take very young girls and restrict them to their harems, creating large numbers of frustrated bachelors without access to girls. Males deprived of the chance of acquiring a mate were likely to attempt the seduction or abduction of young girls and other men's wives, thereby provoking disturbance and violence in the community.

In human history, rape, wife capture, kidnapping and sale of women are very often connected to warfare and occupation of alien territory. Rape and kidnapping were ways to show dominance over defeated enemies. In the Second World War almost 200,000 young girls abducted from homes in Korea and China were forced into a life of sex slavery for the Japanese army. And the Russian soldier's encroachment on an estimated 2 million German females in the last part of the Second World War are examples from the 20th century.

Today some 12,000 women are still abducted and forced into marriage every year on the Asian steppes in the country Kyrgyzstan. The brutal practice of kidnapping brides, known as "ala kachuu" (take and run) could have its roots as far back in history as the Yamnaya culture in the third millennium BC, though with a new peak in the 13th century when Genghis Khan and his Mongolian steppe warriors tyrannized Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

In South America the Jivaro tribe are often considered to be the most warlike people on the New World continent, with a violent history going back to the expansion of the Inca Empire. In the 1980 Ethnographic Atlas, 1231 human societies are coded for degree of polygyny. The Jivaro tribe are at the top of the list with 90% of females sharing a husband.

What exactly went on in Britain in the second half of the third millennia BC we will probably never know. But the replacement of approximately 90% of Britain's gene pool within a few hundred years, and the characterization by Professor Kristian Kristiansen that, "Yamnaya/Bell Beakers could be the most murderous people who ever existed", hint at a historical period where rape, wife capture and kidnapping were widespread.

The construction of an impressive wedding ceremony and celebration center, Stonehenge and Durrington Walls, could have been the indigenous people's desperate attempt to civilize the invaders, unfortunately, without success. The indigenous, monolith builders were wiped out and Stonehenge disintegrated a few hundred years later.

Relevant citations:

“Marriage and alliances between Bell Beaker and non-Bell Beaker communities have been argued to have played a key role in the transferal of the Bell Beaker set.” *The Bell Beaker transition in Europe mobility and local evolution during the 3de millennium BC*, Maria Martinez et al. p53

“In his sample of eighty-four Bell Beaker skulls. The Bell Beaker men had the typical large, round, steep heads; it was the women who were largely responsible for the mixed character of the Bell Beaker population as a whole. Foreign men could have married women from the surrounding communities.” *The Beaker Folk Copper Age archaeology in Western Europe*, Richard Harrison, p161

“With increased wealth concentrated in the hands of a few came the prospect of additional wives. Polygyny flowered – and not just among early farmers. Even today, large herds of cattle, goats, camels, and so forth equal large wealth, which equals large numbers of wives for the “haves”.” *The myth of monogamy*, David Barash, p136

“We conclude that the best predictor of polygyny is fraternal interest group, warfare for capture of women, absence of constraints on expansion into new lands, and environmental quality and homogeneity.” *Causes of polygyny: Ecology, Economy, Kinship, and warfare*, Douglas R White, Michael L. Burton, *American Anthropologist*, Volume 90, Issue 4 p871-887

“Once established in Britain, the Beaker Folk asserted claim to more and more land, for they were also farmers and herders for whom vast expanses of land ensured prosperity. Their warlike natures enabled them to expand territories quickly, and soon they were grazing cattle in much of Britain.” *Arrival of Beaker folk changed Britain for ever, ancient DNA study shows*, Maev Kennedy, *The Guardian*, 22 February 2018

“There certainly was genetic admixture with the indigenous population, over several centuries, so we are clearly not dealing with a “wipeout” scenario.” *The Beaker people*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p436

“The hallmark of a polygamous society is that there is always a shortage of woman” *Marriage and civilization*, William Tucker, p68

“Kyrgyz women`s fight against a brutal tradition. At least 12.000 women are still abducted and forced into marriage every year in Kyrgyzstan. “A happy marriage begins by crying” goes one Kyrgyz proverb. Ala kachuu (take and run) is practiced in all the countries of Central Asia, but is especially common in rural areas of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan.” *Kidnapped, raped, wed against their will*, Mauro Mondello, *The Guardian*, 30 Aug 2021

Replacement of Britain's gene pool

Skeletons from inhumation burials in Britain show a replacement of almost 90% of the indigenous, Neolithic gene pool within a few hundred years from 2400 BC. People with steppe-related ancestry, Yamnaya people from the Pontic steppe east of the Black Sea caused a massive population turnover in most of Europe. In Britain these people were called Bell Beakers after their pottery style.

The 90% genetic turnover in Britain is, however, based on bones from inhumation burials. The indigenous Grooved Ware people practiced cremation of the dead and therefore became genetically invisible, whilst the Bell Beakers practiced inhumation burials in round mounds. This difference could indicate some bias in the genetic data.



The Yamnaya people from the Pontic – Caspian steppe invaded Europe in the third millennium BC.

Relevant citations:

“We document this phenomenon most clearly in Britain, where the spread of the Beaker complex introduced high levels of steppe-related ancestry and was associated with the replacement of approximately 90% of Britain’s gene pool within a few hundred years, continuing the east to west expansion that had brought steppe-related ancestry into central and northern Europe over the previous centuries.” *The Beaker phenomenon and the genomic transformation of northwest Europe*, Olalde et al. *Nature* 2018, 555(7695), 190-196.

“As for the scale and impact of the movement of Beaker people from the Continent, the data imply that enough people migrated to create a substantial long-term demographic effect, with a genetic turnover of local population of 90+/-2% by the Middle Bronze Age.” *The Beaker people*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p13

“It is now clear that the advent of Beaker phenomenon in Britain was accompanied by significant migration from the Continent, with genetic turnover exceeding 90 per cent in the last few centuries of the third millennium” *Archaeology and the genetic revolution in European prehistory*, Kristian Kristiansen, Cambridge University Press, 5 December 2022

“Genomes are very different after 2500 BCE; Neolithic ancestry is almost completely replaced, in the Copper Age, by genomes that share ancestry with central Europeans associated with the Beaker complex.” *Ancestors The prehistory of Britain in seven burials*, Alice Roberts, p284

“In Britain, the arrival of that steppe ancestry in the third millennium BCE is part of a massive population turnover. Despite all the coming and goings by Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and Normans, the genetic background of Britain is predominately that of the Bronze Age.” *Ancestors The prehistory of Britain in seven burials*, Alice Roberts, p289

“A significant amount of marrying-in must have occurred, as this helps to explain the near-total genetic turnover reported by Olalde et al. (2018).” *The Beaker people*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p459

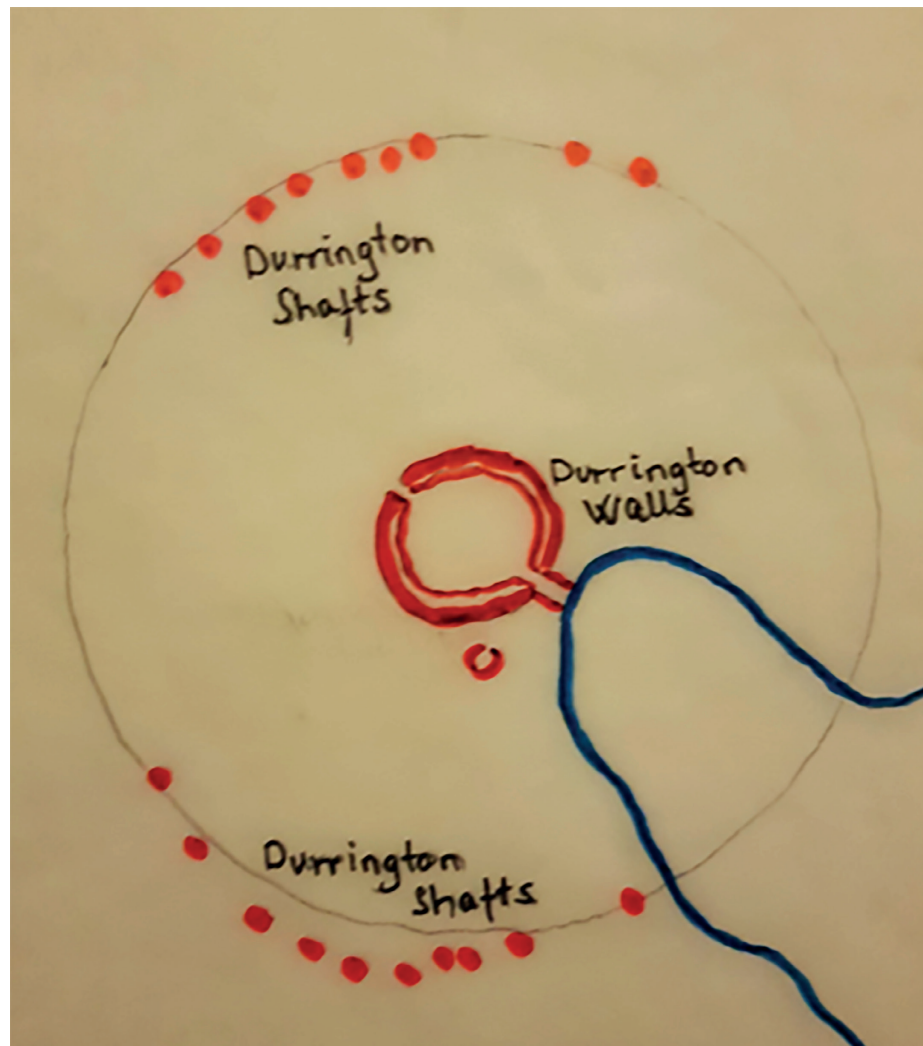
“There could be some bias in the genetic data, simply because it is based on bones from inhumation burials – which are part of the Beaker complex. Indigenous people were practicing cremation, which completely destroys DNA and become genetically invisible.” *Ancestors The prehistory of Britain in seven burials*, Alice Roberts, p293

“Cremation is generally the burial tradition of the earlier third millennium BC, and there is little evidence of continuity into Beaker-style burials.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p176

The Durrington henge and penannular ring

Towards the end of the Durrington Walls settlement's use, its perimeter, 450 meters across, was first encircled by 300 huge wooden posts. Then by a large henge ditch 10 meters in diameter and 5 meters deep with an external bank. These defensive efforts were supplemented with a 2-km-diameter ring of massive shafts, each c 10 meters in diameter and 5 meters or more deep, encircling Durrington Walls. The circle was possibly a boundary, thorn thickets might have been grown between the deep shafts in the circle. Nothing like them has been found elsewhere in Britain and might indicate the importance of Durrington Walls for the late Neolithic people in Britain.

These massive defense efforts probably arose in order to keep hostile gangs away from the celebration area. Most probably these gangs were Bell Beaker people.



Shafts and internal ditch with external bank in red

Relevant citations:

“The Durrington Pits, a ring of prehistoric “shafts” up to 10 metres across and 5 metres deep, just a few miles away from Stonehenge. The mysterious construction, 20 times bigger than Stonehenge and possibly the largest Neolithic structure in the world, has been dated to 2400-2500 BC and appears to delineate a boundary around the super-henge at Durrington Walls.” *The Mystery of the Durrington Pits, Jamie Locke-Jones, University of St Andrews, 9 December 2021*

“Towards the end of the settlement’s use, its perimeter was first encircled by wooden posts and then by a large henge ditch and external bank, completed by 2480-2450 cal BC. The survey also located a 2km diameter penannular ring of massive pits, each c 20m in diameter and 5 m or more deep, encircling Durrington Walls” *Stonehenge for the ancestors Part 1: Landscape and monuments, Mike Parker Pearson et. al p33*

Professor Vincy Gaffney: “The recent work confirms that the circle of shafts surrounding Durrington Walls is without precedent within the UK. It further demonstrates the significance of Durrington Walls Henge and the complexity of the monumental structures within the Stonehenge Landscape, and provides a new insight into how the massive monuments at Durrington and Stonehenge were interlinked, in ways – and at scale – that we had never previously anticipated.” *The Mystery of the Durrington Pits, Jamie Locke-Jones, University of St Andrews, 9 December 2021*

“The 1960 excavations demonstrated the massive scale of an internal ditch at Durrington Walls – originally nearly 10m wide at the top, 6m wide at the bottom and 5,4m deep and required 900.000-man hours to dig. The construction would have necessitated the communal effort of a large group of people inspired by the need for the enormous monument.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region Andrew J Lawson, p83*

“The trigger of this massive construction may have been the impending threat of disunity resulting from first contact with continental Europeans.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p203*

“Around the same time (2400-2030BC), a henge ditch and bank were constructed around the already ancient Late Neolithic timber monument of Woodhenge.” *The Beaker people, Mike Parker Pearson, p 107*

“As many as 300 huge wooden posts, evenly spaced 5m apart in a ring almost 450m across. It would have been an arresting sight, yet within a maximum of 50 years the monument had been decommissioned once more, its posts removed and their sockets filled in, before covered over by the henge that we see today. All trace of the post circle would lie hidden beneath the banks of its successor.” *Rethinking Durrington Walls: a long-lost monument revealed, Current Archaeology, 10 October 2016*

Great Trilithon deep pit

In the second half of the third millennium BC a deep pit was dug at the base of the Great Trilithon. Archaeologists believe it was deliberately done to weaken and bring down the standing stones. The saboteurs achieved their mission – one of the great trilithons fell and symbolically it was the groom stone (55) that crashed. When hitting the ground, it broke and crushed the groom bluestone (66) in pieces. The lintel (156) symbolizing the binding between the indigenous groom and bride has been lying on the ground for probably more than 4000 years. But symbolically the bride stone (56) is still standing.

The saboteurs could have been Beaker people with ancestry from the Pontic steppe. The picture of the fallen groom stone (55) gives associations to some millennia later, the Eurasian steppe rider Genghis Khan and the legends associated with him:

“The greatest pleasure is to vanquish your enemies and chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth and clasp to your bosom their wives and daughters.”



No. 55 (the groom stone) lying broken on the ground with 156 (the bridal couple's lintel) lying in front, but with 56 (the bride stone) demonstratively still standing.

Relevant citations:

“In stage 3, just a century or so after the erection of the Sarsen Circle and the magnificent Trilithon Horseshoe, it was decided to dig a deep pit at the very base of the Great Trilithon. Nobody knows why this was done, but in due course it led to the Trilithon ‘s collapse.” *Stonehenge The Story of a Sacred Landscape, Francis Pryor, p160*

“A large pit was dug to the bottom of the Great Trilithon in 2410-2005 cal BC. The large pit’s purpose is a mystery but digging it was an act that would – unwittingly or otherwise – lead to the Great Trilithon’s destabilization. One possibility is that this was an act of iconoclasm, designed to weaken the central structure of Stonehenge. The collapse of the Great Trilithon could be placed in Stage 4 (starting in 2210-2030 cal BC). [. . .] We interpret the pit-digging as an act of iconoclasm, possible symbolizing Beaker-users ascendancy at Stonehenge.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p111*

“Destabilization of the Great Trilithon might have been an iconoclastic act, testimony to what was now a contested past amid tensions around identity, religious belief and ideology. In the following centuries, Stonehenge seems to have lost its social and spiritual significance, adrift in a sea of fields and farmsteads as power and authority migrated to new regions and new modes of acquisition of power and wealth.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p203*

“The fact that different ceramic styles are not regularly found associated together on settlement sites must in part be a reflection of social segregation.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p263*

“There is nothing to suggest that the users of beakers were involved in the construction of new communal monuments, rather the emphasis of their ritual was directed towards the reflection of individual power and prestige.” *Symbols of power: At the Time of Stonehenge, DV Clarke, p88*

“It seemed to me that Beaker users had smashed the Mount Pleasant monument, and I linked that event to a once unfashionable idea of population change. We now have a DNA data to support the latter, and also a new dating project to confirm that the megaliths at Mount Pleasant were broken up at the very time that the first Beaker migrants had reached Wessex around 2300 BC.” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p214*

“Wrecking bluestones at Stonehenge might look to us like vandalism. The effect of the destruction was to expose a once private place containing Stonehenge ‘s most defining megaliths for all to see.” *How to build Stonehenge, Mike Pitts, p217*

Stonehenge disintegrates

Alternative theory:

The indigenous Neolithic people of Britain became farmers in the fourth millennium BC. But they continued their egalitarian, monogamic hunter and gatherer culture from the Mesolithic Stone Age period. The herds of livestock created living conditions for a larger population, which was mobilized for monument building and communal labor. When polygamic, warlike immigrants arrived in the middle of the second millennium BC, the indigenous people mobilized all their strength to build the Stone Age world's most impressive wedding ceremony center. They hoped this fabulous monument would secure their monogamic culture. But it did not. Their communalistic culture was vulnerable, and the invading Bell Beakers had the recipe to exploit it: a warlike culture, more advanced weapons and a culture of privatizing the most valuable resources and activity. Thus, the indigenous, monogamous, egalitarian people were checkmated. They disappeared, leaving evidence as enigmatic and vague as phantoms in a mist.



Stonehenge disintegrates

Relevant citations:

“Those who had previously commanded widespread support for the construction and modification of the great monument could no longer muster the labor force necessary. Society had moved on. Communal effort was no longer expended on grandiose public monuments but more mundane enterprises such as the creation of fields and enclosures. The failure to maintain Stonehenge was as symbolic of the change in social values as its original construction.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region, Andrew J Lawson, p265*

“Stonehenge seems to have fizzled out, more with a whimper than a bang. This suggests a general lack of interest. Life had moved on, leaving the Stones in their magnificent stillness, a brooding presence in the changing Wiltshire landscape.” *Britain BC Life in Britain and Ireland before the Romans, Francis Pryor, p262*

“The neolithic culture had not the flexibility to deal with the severe economic emergency and still retain its social, ethical and spiritual character intact. Unfortunately, the more volatile conditions and social inequalities that went with kingship and personality-cults seem to have been unavoidable.” *The Stonehenge people An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC, Rodney Castleden, p260*

“Between the 22nd and early 20th centuries the Beaker-associated way of life, originating on the Continent, was now the norm thorough out most of Britain. The Beaker “values” had become the prevailing cultural ethos. Grooved Ware pottery was now largely out of fashion except in a few small pockets across Britain.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p143*

“The iconic sarsen stones at Stonehenge were erected some 4500 years ago. Although the monument’s original purpose is still disputed, we now know that within a few centuries it became memorial to a vanished people. By then, almost every Briton, from the south coast of England to the north-east tip of Scotland, had been wiped out by incomers. The migrants` ultimate source was a group of livestock herders called the Yamnaya who occupied the Eurasian steppe north of the Black Sea. Burial practices shifted dramatically; a warrior class appeared. “I’ve become increasingly convinced there must have been a kind of genocide” says Professor in genome research Kristian Kristiansen.” *Story of the most murderous people of all time revealed in ancient DNA, Kristian Kristiansen, New Scientist, 27march 2019*

“With the village by the river now silent and the timber circles decayed and abandoned this was the end of the age of stone, the age of henges, the time when people from far and wide toiled together to build great places of worship. Now they wanted fine pots and beads, shiny metal, daggers and glittering gold, possessions that would show everyone how wealthy they were in life. They wanted to be buried under white chalk mounds and the white mounds now rose on every hilltop.” *Stonehenge The story so far, Julian Richards, p267*

Silbury Hill

Some miles northwest from Stonehenge lies Silbury Hill, the largest man-made mound in Europe, 39 meters high and covering five acres. It was built in the second half of the third millennium BC.

Who built it and why was it built?

Alternative theory:

Like the Australian Aboriginals and the Native Americans in North America and so many other peoples displaced from their motherland, the indigenous monolith builders in Britain understood their destiny before it was all over. They mobilized, which they had been doing for centuries, hundreds of people coming together enjoying the companionship of shared labor, but this last time building their own grave chamber. Round mounds were the burial tradition of the Bell Beaker people and as a signal to the invaders, the last Grooved Ware people constructed a round mound far, far bigger than any of the many Bell Beaker family graves popping up all over Britain. Excavators in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries have been digging tunnels through Silbury Hill in the hope of finding an emperor or a Tutankhamun's grave. They have not found any because there is none. The monolith builders in Neolithic Britain lived in an egalitarian society free of big chiefs, palaces and oppressive emperors.



Silbury Hill (photo: Martin Hibberd / Shutterstock / NT)

Relevant citations:

“In some important ways the neolithic world was a superior world to those that followed, with more leisure and equality. No man was a serf, no woman a servant.” *The Stonehenge people An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC*, Rodney Castleden p261

“We do not know whether the giant mound (Silbury Hill) had a single purpose or multiple meanings. *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p201

“Silbury Hill represents the swan-song of Britain’s long tradition of massed labour coming together to construct enormous monuments and marks the transition to a new social order. The building of Silbury Hill perhaps combined what were now increasingly old-fashioned notions of communal involvement with new ones of individual commemoration.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p201

“With the sarsen phase of Stonehenge completed by 2475 cal BC and the great henge enclosure of Durrington Walls thrown up by 2450 cal BC, relatively few large monuments were being built. Among the last of these was the great mound of Silbury Hill near Avebury, completed in 2335-2270 cal BC.” *Stonehenge for the ancestors part 2: synthesis*, Mike Parker Pearson et al. p118

“Although there had been great expectations of the excavation of Silbury Hill, it did not succeed in finding a wealth of artefacts beneath the mound and, with the exception of a few animal bones and antler fragments, there were virtually none. Some have suggested that like several of the local long barrows, it was a cenotaph – built to commemorate but not entomb the dead. Why was it built? The fact is that we do not know and it must remain truly enigmatic until further evidence is found.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p129

“The result suggest that the primary turf mound was built rather later than had been thought previously, in the third quarter of the third millennium BC (2415-2190 BC). The implication of these results is that Silbury was built after the other large monuments of the Avebury/Stonehenge complex, and at a time when Beaker pottery was current.” *Chalkland an archaeology of Stonehenge and its region*, Andrew J Lawson, p129

“The third group of monuments (2400-1600BC) consists mainly of the hundreds of Bronze Age round barrows that pepper the landscape or cluster together in complex cemeteries.” *Stonehenge The story so far*, Julian Richards, p30

“As the largest man-made mound in Europe, Silbury Hill has attracted a lot of attention. But after more than two centuries of investigation, it is still reluctant to give up its secrets.” *Avebury Stone Circle The Complete Guide to the Prehistoric Complex*

Bibliography

Aronsen, Marc. *If Stones Could Speak: Unlocking the Secrets of Stonehenge*. National Geographic Society, Washington, 2010, ISBN: 978142605993

Barash, David., Lipton, Judith. *The Myth of Monogamy*. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2002, ISBN: 0805071369

Burl, Aubrey. *A Brief History of Stonehenge*. Carroll & Graf Publishers, New York, 2007, ISBN: 9780786719648

Brunning, Luke. *Does Monogamy Work?* Thames & Hudson, London 2020, ISBN: 9780500295694

Castleden, Rodney. *The Stonehenge People: An Exploration of Life in Neolithic Britain 4700-2000 BC*. Taylor & Francis Group, London, 1990, ISBN: 9780203082485

Chippindale, Christopher. *Stonehenge Complete*. Thames & Hudson, New York, 2012, ISBN: 9780500289662

Cunliffe, Barry. *Britain Begins*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, ISBN: 9780199679454

Darvill, Timothy. "Keeping time at Stonehenge". *Antiquity*, Volume 96, Issue 386, April 2022,doi:10.15184/aqy.2022.

Gould, Eric D., Moav, Omer., Simhon, Avi. "The Mystery of Monogamy", *Hebrew University Economics Working Paper* No. 2003, December 2004, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.437960>

Graeber, David., David, Wengrow. *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2021, ISBN: 9780374157357

Harrison, Richard., Waals, Van der. "The Beaker Folk Copper Age archaeology in Western Europe", *Ancient Peoples & Places series* No 97. London, 1980 doi:10.1017/S0003598X00054740

Herlihy, David. "The Triumph of Monogamy", *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Spring 1995, Vol 25, No.4

Hilts, Carly. "Rethinking Durrington Walls: a long-lost monument revealed", *Current Archaeology*, 10 October 2016

Johnson, Anthony. *Solving Stonehenge: The New Key to an Ancient Enigma*. Thames & Hudson, London, 2008, ISBN: 9780500051559

Keller, Timothy and Kathy. *The Meaning of Marriage*. Penguin Books, 2016, ISBN: 9781594631870

Kennedy, Maev. “Arrival of Beaker folk changed Britain for ever, ancient DNA study shows”, *The Guardian*, 22 February 2018

Koktvedgaard Zeitzen, Miriam. *Polygamy: A Cross – Cultural Analyses*. Berg publisher, Oxford, 2008, ISBN: 9781845202217

Kristiansen, Kristian. *Archaeology and the Genetic Revolution in European Prehistory*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 2022, ISBN: 9781009228688

Kristiansen, Kristian. “Story of the most murderous people of all time revealed in ancient DNA”, *New Scientist*, 27march 2019, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg2413223>

Lawson, Andrew. *Chalkland: An Archaeology of Stonehenge and Its Region*. The Hobnob Press, Salisbury, 2007, ISBN: 9780946418619

Locke-Jones, Jamie. “The Mystery of the Durrington Pit.” *Research Blog. University of St Andrews*, 9 December 2021

Martinez, Maria., Pilar, Prieto, Laure, Salanova. *The Bell Beaker Transition in Europe - Mobility and local evolution during the 3de millennium BC*, Oxford Books, 2015, ISBN: 9781782979302

Milner, Nicky., Taylor, Barry., Conneller, Chantal., Schadla-Hall, Tim. *Star Carr: Life in Britain After the Ice Age*. Council for British Archaeology, York, 2013, ISBN: 9781902771991

Malone, Caroline. *Neolithic Britain and Ireland*. The History Press Gloucestershire, 2011, ISBN: 9780752414423

Mondello, Mauro. “Kidnapped, raped, wed against their will: Kyrgyz women`s fight against a brutal tradition”, *The Guardian*, 30 Aug 2021

Ochota, Mary-Ann. *Secret Britain: Unearthing Our Mysterious Past*. Frances Lincoln Publishing, 2020, ISBN: 9780711253469

Ochota, Mary-Ann. *Hidden Histories: A Spotter`s Guide to the British Landscape*. Quarto Publishing, 2017, ISBN: 9780711236936

Olalde, I., Brace, S., Allentoft, M. *et al.* “The Beaker phenomenon and the genomic transformation of north-west Europe.” *Nature* 555, 190–196 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature25738>

Parker Pearson, Mike. *Stonehenge A New Understanding*. The Experiment, New York, 2013, ISBN: 9781615190799

Parker Pearson, Mike., Pollard, Joshua., Richards, Colin., Thomas, Julian., Tilley, Chris., Welham, Kate. *Stonehenge for the Ancestors Part 1: Landscape and Monument*. Sidestone Press, Leiden, ISBN: 9789088907029

Parker Pearson, Mike., Pollard, Joshua., Richards, Colin., Thomas, Julian., Tilley, Chris., Welham, Kate. *Stonehenge for the Ancestors Part 2: Synthesis*. Sidestone Press, Leiden, ISBN: 9789088907050

Parker Pearson, Mike et al. "Materializing Stonehenge: The Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries." *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol.11(1/2) 227-261, doi.org/10.1177/135918350606302

Parker Pearson, Mike., Sheridan, Alison., Jay, Mandy., Chamberlain, Andrew., Richards Michael., Evans, Jane. *The Beaker People: Isotopes, Mobility and Diet in Prehistoric Britain*. Oxbow Books, 2019, ISBN: 9781789250640

Pearsall, M.S. Sarah. *Polygamy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University press, Oxford, 2021, ISBN: 9780197533178

Pitts, Mike. *How to Build Stonehenge*. Thames & Hudson, London, 2022, ISBN: 9780500024195

Pitts, Mike. *Hengeworld: Life in Britain 2000 BC as Revealed by the Latest Discoveries at Stonehenge, Avebury and Stanton Drew*. Arrow Books, London, 2001, ISBN: 9780099278757

Pryor, Francis. *Stonehenge: The Story of a Sacred Landscape*. Pegasus Books, New York, 2017, ISBN: 9781681776408

Pryor, Francis. *Britain BC: Life in Britain and Ireland before the Romans*. Harper Perennial London, 2004, ISBN: 97800071266934

Pryor, Francis. *Farmers in Prehistoric Britain*. The History Press Gloucestershire, 2011, ISBN: 9780752438672

Pryor, Francis. *Flag Fen: Life and Death of a Prehistoric Landscape*. The History Press Gloucestershire, 2015, ISBN: 9780752429007

Richards, Julian. *Stonehenge: The Story So Far*. Historic England Swindon, 2017, ISBN 9781848021006

Roberts, Alice. *Ancestors: A Prehistory of Britain in Seven Burials*. Simon & Schuster UK, 2021, ISBN: 9781471188039

Sjögren Karl-Göran., Ahlsröm, Torbjörn *Kvinnan från Österöd – ett tidigmesolitiskt skelett från Bohulän*. 2009, <https://www.academia.edu>

Smith, Martin., Brickley, Megan. *People of the Long Barrows: Life, Death and Burial in the Earlier Neolithic*. The History Press, 2009, ISBN: 9780752447339

Tucker, William. *Marriage and Civilization: How Monogamy Made Us Human*. Regnery Publishing, Washington, 2014, ISBN: 9781621572015

White, Douglas R., Michael L. Burton. "Causes of Polygyny: Ecology, Economy, Kinship, and Warfare." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 90, no. 4, 1988, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/680762>.

