

Stonehenge



Stonehenge is one of the most famous sights in England. Its history is also very interesting.

Stonehenge is a circle of stones in the south of England. It was started in the Stone Age and continued to be built into the Bronze Age.

First Stage

The stone circle was built in several stages. They started by digging a circular ditch using picks made from antlers. There were two entrances to the circle. There were 56 pits dug around it that were one metre deep with flat bottoms.

Second Stage

In the second stage, 82 stones were added in a double circle pattern. These stones came all the way from south Wales, 240 miles away. They were called bluestones because they looked blue when they were broken or wet. The bluestones were around two metres tall and over one metre wide.



Third Stage

More stones were added about 500 years later. These were called Sarsen Stones. They were over four metres high and two metres wide and weighed up to 30 tonnes. An outer circle was created by laying stones horizontally across the top. In the middle of the circle, more stones were arranged in a horseshoe shape. At the centre, there was a stone called the Altar Stone. In the final stage of building, the original bluestones were rearranged in the horseshoe and circle shape that can be seen today.



Did You Know...?

Pictures of axe-heads and daggers were carved on some of the Sarsen stones.



The stones had bumps and holes carved into them so that they fit together. They were carefully lined up so that the sunrise can be seen at midsummer, and sunset can be seen at midwinter at opposite ends of the circle. The stones were incredibly heavy, and it probably took around 600 men to move each massive stone by pulling them on ropes over a line of logs. The stones were lifted by sliding them into holes and using large wooden frames and ropes to pull them up in the right direction.

The Slaughter Stone

One of the stones in Stonehenge looks red when it is wet. This is called the Slaughter Stone. The iron in the rock gives it a red appearance.



