

The Bronze Age: Stonehenge

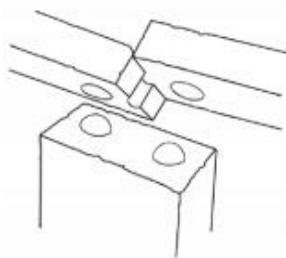
Stonehenge is a very famous stone circle in the south of England that was started in the Stone Age and continued into the Bronze Age. They started by digging a circular ditch that was 100 metres across using picks made from antlers. There were two entrances to the circle. There were 56 pits dug around it which were one metre deep, with flat bottoms. They could have held timber posts, or stones, or might have been a part of a religious ceremony.

The second stage saw 82 stones 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 if they were broken or wet. The stones were around two metres tall and over one metre wide.



About 500 years later, more stones were added. The Sarsen stones were enormous, over four metres high, two metres wide and weighing up to 30 tonnes! An outer circle was created, with stones laid horizontally across the top. In the middle, more stones were arranged in a horseshoe shape. At the centre was a stone called the Altar Stone.

During the final changes, the original bluestones were rearranged into the horseshoe and circle shape that can be seen today. The stones were lined up so you can see the sunrise at midsummer and the sunset at midwinter at opposite ends of the circle.



To make the stones fit together well, they carved bumps and holes to make them fit together, a bit like building bricks!

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Questions

1. Where is Stonehenge?
2. When was it started?
3. How did they dig the ditch?
4. Where did the bluestones come from?
5. How many bluestones were there?
6. What are the larger stones called?
7. What was the stone in the middle called?
8. How did the slaughter stone get its name?
9. There is so much we don't know about Stonehenge. If you could go back in time and find out the answer to just one question about Stonehenge, what would the question be?
10. No one really knows why it was built. Why do you think it was built? What do you think it was used for?
11. In the past, anyone could walk round Stonehenge but now it has a rope round it to protect it. Do you think people should be able to walk round the stones? Why?