

MEGALITH

Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site Newsletter



JULY 2016

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Inside West Kennet Long Barrow © Mike Goddard



ENGLISH HERITAGE

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highways
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WILTSHIRE MUSEUM
DEVIZES



Historic England

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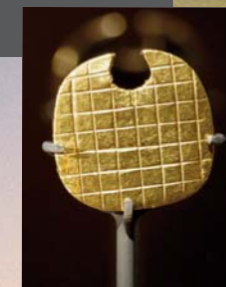
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1986-2016
UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES THIRTY YEARS IN THE UK





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Silbury Hill © Mike Goddard

Welcome to the fifth edition of Megalith, the annual newsletter for the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site. It aims to give you an update on the work that has taken place over the past year and looks forward to the coming year's activities.

The World Heritage Site (WHS) is managed by a range of partners from all sectors including charities such as the National Trust, English Heritage and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and national agencies and government departments such as Natural England, Historic England and the MoD. This also includes the local community with town and parish councils, amenity groups and Wiltshire Council also involved in many activities that contribute to its management and protection.

To find out more about how the WHS is managed please take a look at our website

www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org

or follow us on Twitter [@StoneAveWHS](https://twitter.com/StoneAveWHS)



Photo © Beth Thomas



Photo © Historic England

We hope that you enjoy this edition of Megalith. Please contact us if you want to find out more.

Photo © Beth Thomas

30th Anniversary of the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site

In November 1986 at the 10th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris seven UK sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List. Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites and six other sites:

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast; Durham Castle and Cathedral; Ironbridge Gorge; Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey; The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd and St Kilda; were the first in the UK to receive this honour.

The World Heritage Committee papers from 1986 indicate that there were 36 sites on the UK tentative list at that time. The 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention was not signed by the UK until 1984 and this may account for the long tentative list, a back log perhaps of UK Sites to be considered. Many of the Sites on the original list have since gone on to be inscribed including the cities of Bath (1987) and Edinburgh (1995), Neolithic Orkney (1999), Hadrian's Wall (1987) and New Lanark (2001).

Since the first Management Plans in 1998/2000 the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site has had the benefit of a strong partnership of organisations, both national and local, who manage the WHS through the local steering groups.

Stonehenge Visitor Centre © Historic England



In the past 30 years there have been some tremendous successes.

- Around 750 ha of agricultural land in WHS have been reverted to pasture with a great deal of support from Defra/Natural England. Not only does this help to protect fragile archaeological remains from the plough but it also has the benefit of enhancing biodiversity.
- A huge amount of archaeological research has revealed more about the landscapes of the WHS and expanded our knowledge and understanding of the Site.



- Silbury Hill was stabilised and conserved in 2007, making good the work undertaken by antiquarians in the 18th and 19th centuries and archaeologists of the mid 20th century alike.

- In 2012 the Site was able to fulfil the UK Government's commitment made at the time of inscription to close the A344 which ran close to the Stones at Stonehenge and to reunite the monument with its Avenue

- An award-winning Visitor Centre opened at Stonehenge in 2013 providing for the first time on site interpretation and both an exhibition and education space for visitors and schools.

- The governance of the WHS was strengthened with the creation of a Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Panel to address issues affecting both parts of the WHS in the same year.

- In May 2015, the first joint Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan was produced by the Coordination Unit.

These and many other improvements have been achieved through commitment to partnership working across the World Heritage Site which has helped to overcome the complex management challenges that come with multiple ownership and multi-agency environment.

A lot of progress has been made over the last 30 years, a blink of the eye for a landscape shaped over more than 5,000 years!

Here's to the next 30 years!



Photo © National Trust/Clare Green



Photo © Mike Goddard

Stonehenge and Avebury along with the other six sites are celebrating the 30-year milestone with events taking place around the country. Here in Wiltshire you can celebrate the 30th anniversary by taking up the National Trust's World Heritage Walking Challenge (<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/avebury/features/stonehenge-and-avebury-walking-challenge>), signing up for a number of talks at the Wiltshire Museum with a Stonehenge and Avebury theme or joining in with English Heritage's events at the Visitor Centre at Stonehenge.

Find out about our celebratory Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage conference in November elsewhere in Megalith.

You can see the original nomination document on our website at <http://www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org/downloads/nomination-document-2/>

To find out more about World Heritage Sites in the UK and work across the UK go to World Heritage UK's website at

<https://worldheritageuk.org/>

Photo © Chris Newton



Photo © Mike Goddard



Above: Wilsford by Peter Lorimer © English Heritage

To find out more about World Heritage Convention and the more than 1000 World Heritage Sites across the world please look at the UNESCO World Heritage website

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/>



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Stonehenge, Avebury
and Associated Sites
inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1986

World Heritage at Risk

At the same time as the first 7 UK Sites, a further 22 cultural and natural sites from Australia to Zimbabwe were inscribed onto the World Heritage List.

Three of these sites are now on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger. The Ancient City of Aleppo in Syria and the Old City of Sana'a in Yemen have both been seriously damaged by conflict.

The recent events in Syria and Iraq with the destruction of ancient sites by Daesh or ISIS remind us of the fragility of our heritage and how easily it can be lost. The partial destruction of Sites such as Palmyra and Aleppo not only represents a loss of archaeological remains but also of the cultural identity and history of the people who live in this part of the world. Our heritage is fragile and although thankfully we are not at threat from the effects of conflict we do have other challenges to address.

The World Heritage Site Coordination Unit works with its partners to protect Stonehenge and Avebury from threats such as ploughing in areas where there is sensitive buried archaeology, burrowing animals and development pressure.



The Ancient City of Aleppo, Syria



The Old City of Sana'a, Yemen

World Heritage in numbers

1986

244 Sites on the World Heritage List in total

178 Cultural Sites

56 Natural Sites

10 Mixed cultural and natural sites

29 Sites inscribed onto the List

7 Sites from the UK

16 Sites from Europe

2 Sites from the Middle East

4 Sites from India

4 Sites from Africa

1 Site from Australia

2 Sites from America

23 Cultural Sites

5 Natural Sites

1 Mixed cultural and natural Site

2016

1031 Sites on the World Heritage List in total

802 – Cultural Sites

197 – Natural Sites

32 – Mixed cultural and natural Sites

Top 3 Countries

(based on number of World Heritage Sites)

51 World Heritage Sites in Italy

48 World Heritage Sites in China

44 World Heritage Sites in Spain

You can find out lots of statistics about World Heritage from the UNESCO World Heritage website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat>

30th Anniversary Conference 19th November 2016



Photo © Mike Goddard

The main celebration of our 30th anniversary will be a conference in Devizes on 19th November this year. We have a wide range of speakers reflecting both the importance of Stonehenge and Avebury in its British and European context but also looking at the changes we have seen over the past 30 years including the gains in biodiversity and the improvement of the setting of the hundreds of monuments which make up the World Heritage Site. We will look at the great strides in our understanding of the World Heritage Site through research carried out since its inscription and a panel of eminent archaeologists will look to the future to predict what gains in knowledge we might make in the next 30 years.

On Sunday 20th November there will be the opportunity to take part in specially guided visits to the museums holding finds from the World Heritage Site and related objects in Avebury, Devizes and Salisbury.

Confirmed speakers include:

Prof. Vincent Gaffney, University of Bradford
(Hidden Landscapes Project)

Dr Alison Sheridan,
National Museums of Scotland

Dr Serge Cassen, University of Nantes

Julian Richards, Archaeologist and
broadcaster

Dr Josh Pollard, University of Southampton
(Between the Monuments Project)

Dr Amanda Chadburn, Historic England

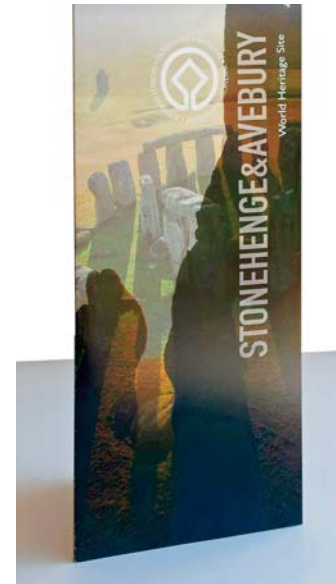
Dr Nick Snashall, National Trust

Dr Ros Cleal, National Trust

To find further details on the programme
and how to book please see

www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org

New World Heritage Site Information Leaflet



The WHS Coordination Unit has produced a new information leaflet to help explain what a World Heritage Site is and what makes Stonehenge and Avebury so special.

The leaflet also helps to explain how the Site is managed and provides information on current priorities for its protection and improvement.

It can be downloaded at
<http://www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org/new-leaflet/>



Information leaflet © Mike Goddard

Stonehenge Community Loan Box

The Stonehenge Community Loan Box was launched in June 2015 with the aim of engaging visitors who may not normally be able to visit Stonehenge. Over the last year we have had a variety of groups use the box from day centres and Mind UK, to a poetry and a veterans group.



Stonehenge Community Loan Box

The Stonehenge Community Loan Box is filled with 16 interesting objects offering handlers the opportunity to glean information about the mysteries of Stonehenge and its builders. The Box also contains object cards, a guidebook, a talk on CD, A3 contextual images and a presentation.

The loan box sessions can either be led by your group leaders or a volunteer can come from Stonehenge during your normal meeting time (depending on availability).

Club Friday group organisers said the loan box 'gives you a feeling of the age and amazing skills of people in those hard days'.

To find out more about borrowing the Community Loan Box please visit our website:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/stonehenge/families/



Durrington Walls: Unearthing the Secrets of Stonehenge's 'Superhenge'

When it comes to the ancient and precious gem that is the Stonehenge Landscape it seems the harder we look the more we find. Over the course of the last five years a team of archaeologists from across Europe led by Professor Vince Gaffney of Bradford University have been carrying out a vast geophysical survey covering almost every blade of grass that the National Trust care for in the Stonehenge Landscape (about 2100 acres). They've made dozens of new discoveries, some of them entirely unknown sites. But possibly the most astonishing they've found is that something – in fact possibly as many as two hundred somethings – lie buried beneath the bank of Durrington Walls henge.

Their surveys have revealed an arc of large solid objects some as much as two or three metres long. But what are they? Vince and his Hidden Landscapes team think they're the remains of standing stones. If they are they would be the remains of a stone monument so vast that it would only be rivalled by the great Outer Circle at Avebury. On the other hand Professor Mike Parker Pearson and his multi-university Stonehenge Riverside Project think that they may be pits dug to contain giant timber posts but then backfilled.

There's only one way to find out - and that's to dig! So the Hidden Landscapes team, the Stonehenge Riverside Project and the National Trust have joined forces to create an archaeological 'superteam'.



Durrington Anomalies © Ludwig Boltzmann Institute

In the first two weeks of August this summer we will be excavating the 'Superhenge' to discover what the four thousand five hundred year old secret is that lies buried at Durrington Walls.

You can get daily updates from the trenches when we're digging on our FragneNTs blog <http://ntarchaeostonehengeaveburywhs.wordpress.com/blog/> or follow our progress on the @DrNickNT Twitter feed. Better still come and take a look for yourself. Our crack team of volunteer guides will be down on the dig site ready to share all of our latest discoveries with you.

You'll find Durrington Walls just off of the A345 about half a mile north of the Countess Roundabout – just follow the signs for Woodhenge. See you there!



New displays from the Wiltshire Museum at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre

Nearly 4,000 years ago, a woman was buried in one of the barrows that cluster on every surrounding ridge around Stonehenge, such as those found on Normanton Down. Placed alongside her were pendants and beads of amber; jet, shale, gold and fossils. These items are now on display at Stonehenge and help visitors to understand the importance of Stonehenge throughout the early Bronze Age. These objects are kindly on loan to Stonehenge from Wiltshire Museum - where over half of the Early Bronze Age gold ever discovered in Britain is on display!

Curators and conservators have been busy at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre replacing artefacts on display in one of the cases - swapping items from one Bronze Age barrow (Wilsford G7) with items from another, Wilsford G8. These objects were made by highly skilled craftspeople experimenting with innovative techniques. The amber earrings are the earliest items found in Britain to show signs of being worked with a lathe. The miniature amber and gold pendant in the form of an axe is interpreted as a symbol of power and prestige. Axes were also carved on the stones of Stonehenge, showing a direct link between these important people and the monument itself.



Jo Hutchings of Wiltshire Museum says, "My favourite item is the miniature cup. The story goes that an 'enthusiastic antiquary present at the opening of the barrow fancied he could see in this cup a design taken from the outward circle of Stonehenge'. Centuries later, children visiting the Wiltshire Museum galleries say the same thing!"



The burials in these cemeteries of round barrows between 2,400 and 1,600BC were accompanied by rich grave goods. They are known to archaeologists today as 'Wessex Culture' burials.

Gold, amber and shale may have been thought to have magical properties by early Bronze Age people.



Eric Reginald Lubbock, fourth Baron Avebury,

29 September 1928 – 14 February 2016

Lord Eric Avebury was enormously proud to be the grandson of the first Lord Avebury, who introduced the Ancient Monuments Protection Act (1882). Lord Eric Avebury successfully appealed as hereditary owner against Silbury Hill being designated 'open access' under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), which would have led to vulnerable archaeology being lost to erosion from constant visitor footfall.

He strongly supported the idea that: "there must be a partnership between the guardians of all the great monuments in the World Heritage Site, the people who live in and around the WHS, and the public at large." "We are the "trustees of an ancient domain", caring for the "silent witnesses of prehistory".

Lord Avebury and his support of the World Heritage Site will be very much missed.



Lord Avebury at Silbury Hill ©Victoria Lubbock

Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve update

Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve (NNR) lies in the eastern part of the Avebury half of the World Heritage Site. The area is an NNR for its geological importance. You can still find naturally occurring sarsen stones used in the construction of many of the monuments lying on the ground where they were formed. In addition the NNR contains large areas of Bronze Age field systems.



Yellowhammer © Natural England

One of the more noticeable changes on the reserve which took place over the winter months involved work by local contractors to clear patches of gorse in order to expose sarsen stones and link grassland clearings. This work will enable grazing cattle to move more freely, increase shelter for insects and encourage young growth

which is more suitable for breeding birds than old leggy bushes.

October 2015 saw the establishment of a small but dedicated band of volunteers who meet on most Wednesdays to assist Natural England with managing the National Nature Reserve. The group has helped with clearing hawthorn scrub from flower rich grassland on the valley sides, removing dense gorse from around sarsen stones and carrying out the initial work to restore an overgrown pond in Totterdown Wood.

Tree removal at Totterdown Wood pond © Natural England

This spring we hope to install a number of new interpretation panels designed to inform visitors about the rich history, archaeology, geology and wildlife. Later in the autumn Natural England will be working with the landowner to restore the sight of swathes of colourful wildflowers to areas of the ancient grassland from which they have been lost.



if you have any questions about the reserve management or would like to get involved as a volunteer please contact the Reserve Manager Ben Cooke on 07776 227068

Surveying solutions for the A303



Traffic on the A303 near Stonehenge © Beth Thomas

If you're out and about in and around the World Heritage Site (WHS) over the next few months you might spot some unusual activity, or a piece of strange-looking equipment.

The chances are you'll have stumbled across some of the survey work Highways England's engineers are carrying out as part of the planning process to improve the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down. Regular readers of Megalith may remember our story last July about the Government's announcement to fully dual the length of the A303 to improve journey times and boost the UK economy by creating an expressway to the south west.

Highways England is examining all possible routes, some of which have been considered in the past, to get to the best solution. By gathering detailed information about the environment, archaeology and ground conditions across a wide area, engineers can fully assess all the options before consulting the public about them.

Whichever option is chosen the aim is to reconnect Stonehenge and its surrounding monuments with their setting in a restored natural chalk landscape. This matches the WHS' strategy of protecting and enhancing its Outstanding Universal Value.



Standing traffic on the A303 © Historic England

For more information visit the Highways England website, where there is more information, at:

www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/a303-amesbury-to-berwick-down/

Update from The Salisbury Museum



Phil Harding at The Salisbury Museum

Photo © The Salisbury Museum

It is not always immediately obvious, that the daily life of a museum is so much more than displaying objects. The Salisbury Museum often finds itself at the very heart of new discoveries and fascinating research. The recent discovery of the Deverill Villa is no exception. Working with Historic England Archaeologist, Dr David Roberts, the museum helped confirm evidence of a grand villa, built sometime between 175 AD and 220 AD, on a site that had remained untouched since its collapse 1400 years ago. This culminated in a small exhibition in the Wessex Gallery showcase where visitors could see firsthand, a tempting selection of finds, including tesserae and oyster shells, which spoke of an opulent lifestyle.

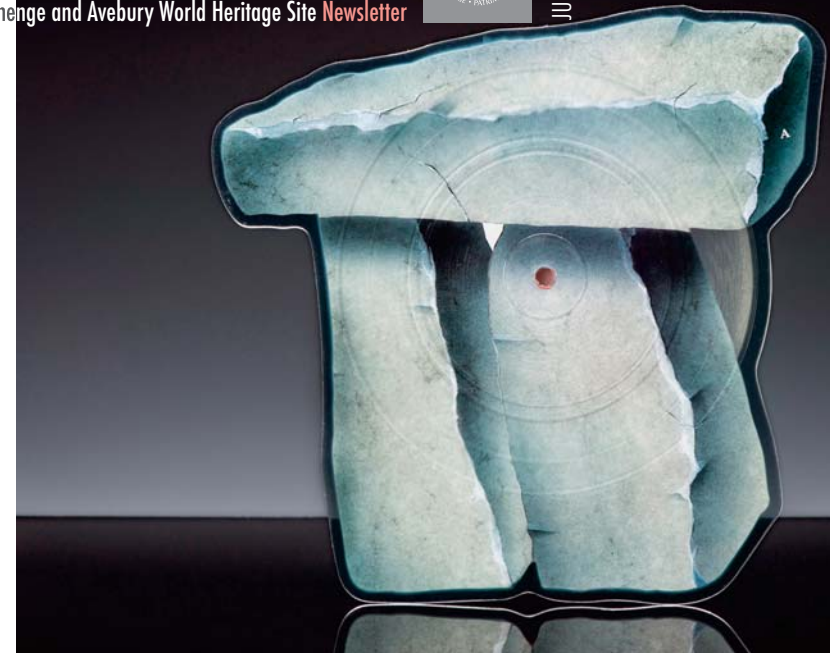
A touring exhibition from the British Museum, which opened on 21 May 2016, 'Writing for Eternity: Decoding Ancient Egypt' tells the story of 4,000 years of the evolution of writing in Egypt, through an array of stunning objects and hands-on activities.

The Festival of Archaeology 2016 will take place over the weekend of 23/24 July, when archaeologist Dr Phil Harding will lead an excavation in the museum grounds. The dig will reveal how archaeologists plan and execute their work. With a showground of living history and diverse programme of talks, there is something for fans of archaeology of all ages.

Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum



Statue of a seated scribe (EA2308)



Spinal Tap shaped album © English Heritage

Celebrating 30 years of World Heritage in 30 Objects

In the spirit of The British Museum's *A History of the World in 100 Objects* project we thought we would explore the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS through a "virtual exhibition" of 30 objects.

Each object will tell a story about a key moment in the history of the WHS or the development of our understanding of it. It will also reflect attributes of Outstanding Universal Value such as for example the relationship of monuments to the landscape or astronomy or their influence on artists and architects. The object might also reveal other values related to the WHS or how it is understood today in popular culture or from a spiritual perspective.

The World Heritage Site Coordination Unit has been talking to local museum curators, archaeologists and historians for ideas.

We want to know how local residents and visitors connect to Stonehenge and Avebury WHS. Maybe you have a favourite souvenir from your visit? Or a postcard from a friend?

Submit your nomination for the 30th object through our Twitter account @StoneAveWHS using the hashtag #megalith30.

Keep an eye on our social media sites for the winning object, which will be revealed at the 30th Anniversary Conference in November.

The Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Arts Symposium



Stonehenge during a storm, JMW Turner © The Salisbury Museum

One of the reasons for Stonehenge and Avebury being inscribed on the World Heritage List is the Sites' influence on architects, artists, historians and others.

The Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan 2015 includes a policy which aims to use artists and the creative sector to find "new and inspiring ways for communities and a wider range of visitors to engage with and learn about the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS".

To explore how we could take this policy forward the WHS Coordination Unit and the Arts Team of Wiltshire Council held an Arts Symposium in November 2015. Around 50 people gathered at the Town Hall in Devizes to help shape future strategy and ideas.

The delegates consisted of representatives of organisations helping to manage the World Heritage Site, and a wide range of people involved in arts as practitioners, producers and venues in Wiltshire and beyond.

There were presentations from the WHS Coordination Unit, English Heritage, the National Trust and The Salisbury Museum with an opportunity for the delegates to talk about what is needed to enable artists to work positively with the WHS manager to continue creating inspirational work whilst at the same time protecting fragile archaeological remains.

Further work and discussion is needed and a framework to help managers and artists work together is in development.



Sacrilege, Jeremy Deller © Glasgow International Festival of Contemporary Art

For further updates please contact the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Coordination unit or follow us on Twitter.