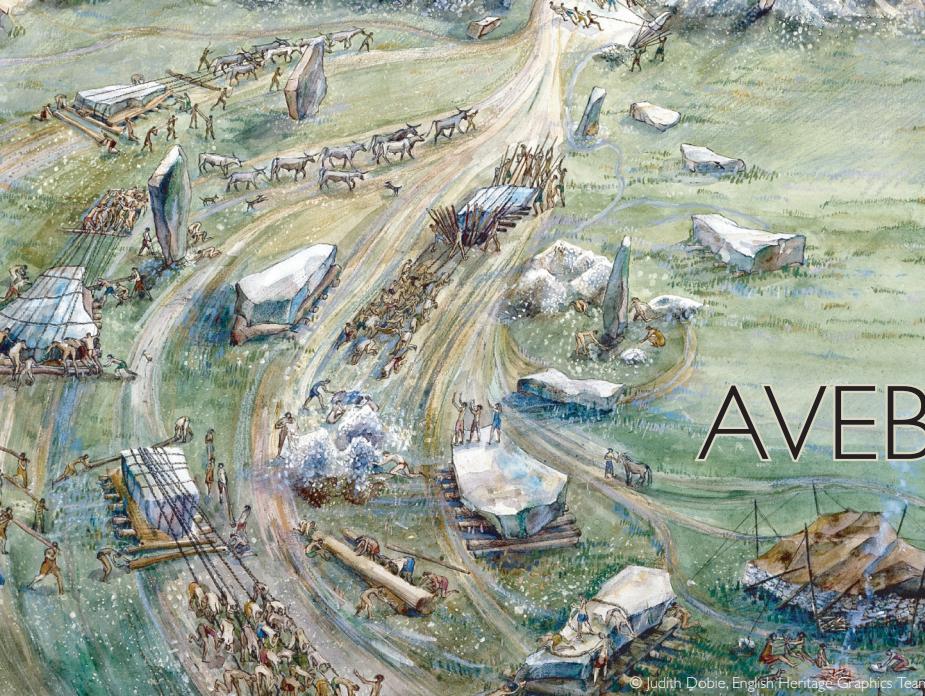




ENGLISH HERITAGE

Investigate: AVEBURY HENGE



An artist's idea of the building of Avebury

- ① Henges are circular banks and ditches, built for ceremonies about four or five thousand years ago. There are more than 200 henges in Europe, but Avebury is the second largest.

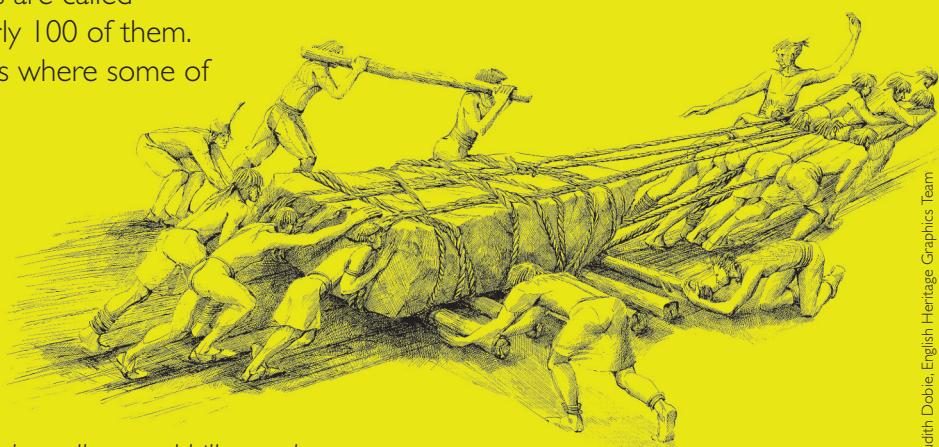
Can you think of another very famous henge?



- ② Inside the henge is a massive stone circle with two smaller circles inside it. The stones are called sarsens. Originally there were nearly 100 of them. The concrete posts mark the spots where some of them are missing.

Do you think this is how the stones were moved?

How else could it have been done?



The sarsens were brought here from the valleys and hills nearby.

- ③ Stand by one of the sarsen stones. They are about 35 million years old. That's young compared to other stones, for example granite.



Look carefully and you may see the holes made by roots when the stones were being formed.

- ④ This is the Barber's Stone. It has a gruesome story to tell! 700 years ago people tried to bury the stones. A man was trapped and buried under this one. Find out how the stone got its name when you visit the Museum.

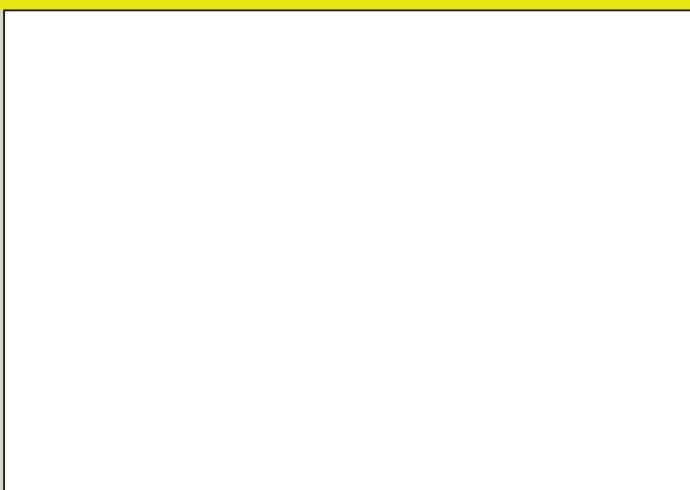


- ⑤ Cross the road carefully and find the two huge stones near the edge of the circle. Stand on the outside of the circle.

Which one do you think is called the Devil's Chair?

Why?

Draw the stone and sketch in the 'seat' of the chair.



- ⑥ Climb the steps onto the bank. From here you can see the West Kennet Avenue which once stretched 2.5km to another monument called the Sanctuary.

- ⑦ Now look at the ditch. It has silted up. Once it was so deep that a two-storied house would fit in it!

How deep do you think it is now?

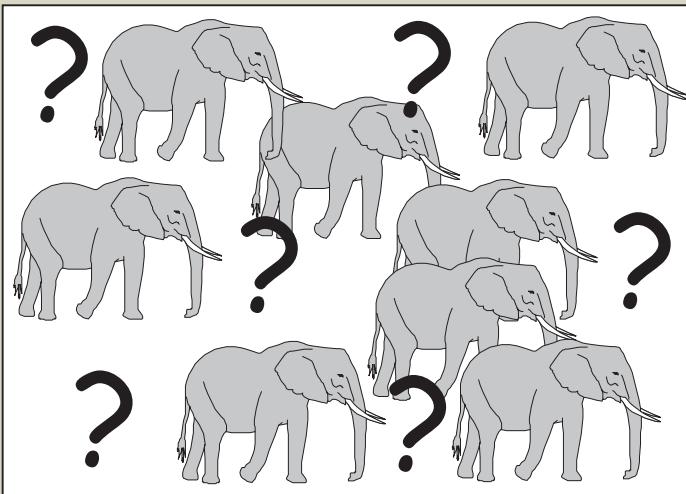
- ⑧ Walk across to the gate near the houses. Cross the road carefully and go through the next gate. The two big stones you can see were once part of a large group of sarsens. This would have been a very special part of the henge.

What do you think might have happened here?



⑨ The wide stone is much bigger than it looks. It goes 3m into the ground and weighs 100 tonnes! One African elephant weighs 5 tonnes.

How many elephants weigh as much as this stone?



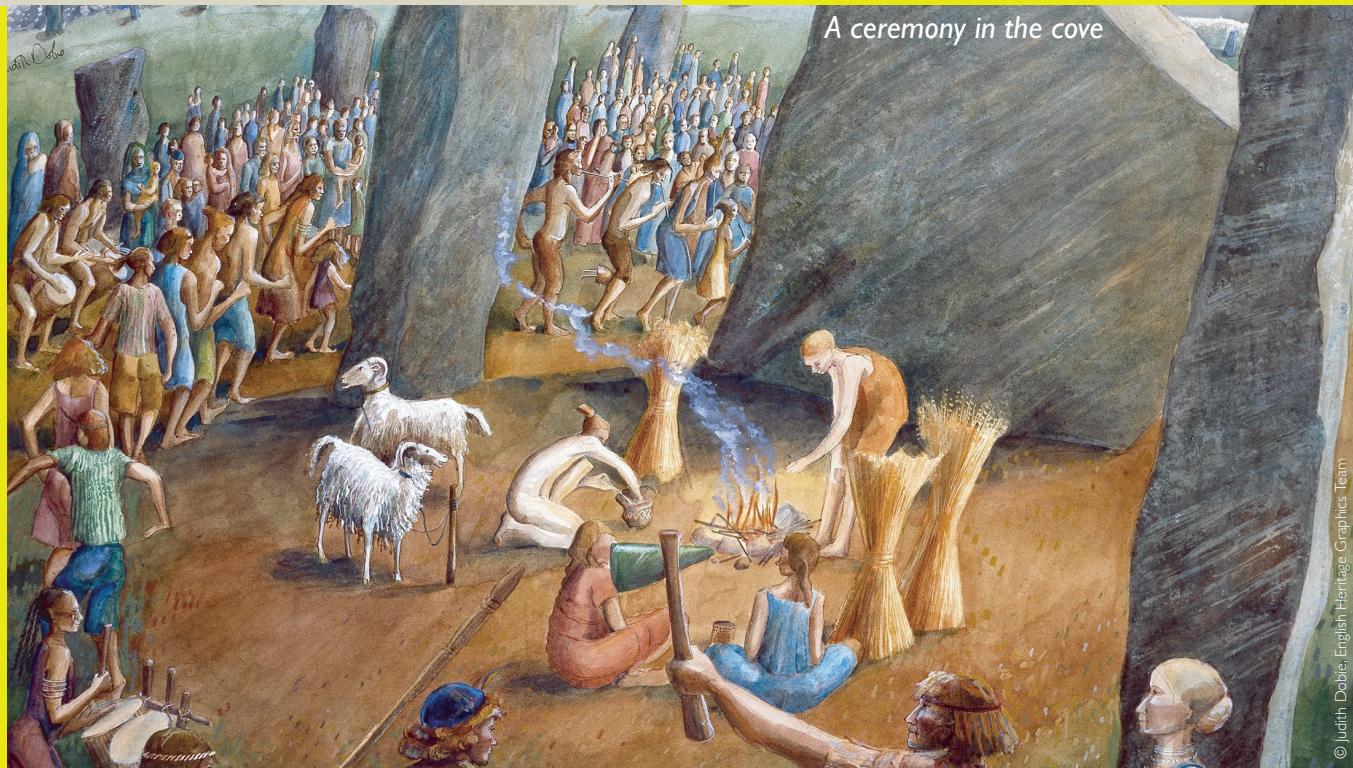
⑩ Cross the next road very carefully and follow the little path to the next gate.
Straight ahead of you is the Swindon Stone.

How do you think it got its name?

⑪ Now you have seen Avebury Henge, what do you think it was for?

	Yes	No	Maybe
Would it be an easy place to defend from attack?			
Was it a meeting place for tribes?			
Would it be a good place to keep animals?			
Was it a place to trade animals and goods?			
Could it be some kind of calendar?			
What other ideas have you got?			

Discuss your answers with your class



A ceremony in the cove

© Judith Dobbie, English Heritage Graphics Team

Alexander Keiller Museum

⑫ Avebury Henge was built about 5,000 years ago, in the Neolithic (Stone Age).

See how many different ways stone was used at that time.

⑬ Pottery was used to eat from.
What else were pots used for?

⑯ Choose the object you find most interesting.
Why did you choose it?