



Stonehenge is one of the world's most famous monuments. It stands on **Salisbury Plain**, in Wiltshire, and its giant stones can be seen from miles around.

Stonehenge was built over many hundreds of years. Work began in the late Neolithic Age, around 3000 BC.

We may never know exactly why Stonehenge was built, but people probably gathered there for **religious ceremonies**.

How was Stonehenge built?

The first task was to cut the boulders into shape. Archaeologists believe that the ancient Britons hammered wedges of wood into cracks in the stone. When the wood was soaked in water, it expanded and split the stone. Next, the builders used **chisels** and **hammers** to shape them. The stones were then transported to the building site. They were probably carried on **rafts** down rivers, then dragged over land by teams of men and oxen. It's believed that the stones were placed on **giant wooden sledges** and pulled along the ground using log rollers.

The builders dug **deep ditches** for the stones. Then they pulled on ropes to raise them and packed the ditches with rocks to hold the

stones in place. It took a huge effort to build Stonehenge. The only tools the builders had were made of stone, wood and rope! Only a few stones are left standing today.

What was Stonehenge for?

Why did the ancient Britons build such a massive monument at Stonehenge? What exactly went on at this sacred site?

Some people think that Stonehenge was used to study the movements of the Sun and Moon. Other people think it was a place of healing.

The ancient Britons believed that the Sun and Moon had a special power over their lives. It is very likely that they held special ceremonies at Stonehenge on **Midsummer's Day** (the longest day of the year) and on **Midwinter's Day** (the shortest day of the year).

Many experts believe that Stonehenge was used for funerals. They suggest that people carried the dead along the River Avon, and then walked up to Stonehenge in a grand procession.

Stonehenge is just one of **hundreds** of stone circles that have been found in Britain. During the early Bronze Age, circles built from stone or wood played a very important part in the religious life of the British people.