**[Stonehenge](http://www.ancient.eu/stonehenge/)** is a [**Neolithic**](http://www.ancient.eu/Neolithic/) / [**Bronze Age**](http://www.ancient.eu/Bronze_Age/) monument located on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, southern [**England**](http://www.ancient.eu/england/). The first monument on the site, began around 3100 BC, was a circular ‘henge’ earthwork about 360 feet (110 metres) in diameter, a 'henge' in the archaeological sense being a circular or oval-shaped flat area enclosed by a boundary earthwork.This structure probably contained a ring of 56 wooden posts (or possibly an early bluestone circle), the pits for which are named Aubrey Holes (after the 17th century local antiquarian John Aubrey). Later, around 3000BC (the beginning of Stonehenge Phase II), some kind of timber structure seems to have been built within the enclosure, and Stonehenge functioned as a cremation cemetery, the earliest and largest so far discovered in [**Britain**](http://www.ancient.eu/britain/). Phase III at Stonehenge, beginning around 2,550 BC, involved the refashioning of the simple earth and timber henge into a unique stone monument.In the first stage, two concentric circles, (sometimes known as the ‘Double Bluestone Circle’), of 80 ‘bluestone’ (dolorite, rhyolite and tuff) pillars were erected at the centre of the monument, with a main entrance to the North East. These bluestones, weighing about 4 tons each, originate in the Preseli Hills, in Pembrokeshire, south-west Wales, and were probably transported from there to Salisbury Plain over a route at least 185 miles long (see the chapter on Preseli). Apart from the bluestones, a 16.4 foot long greenish sandstone slab, now known as the Altar Stone, was brought to Stonehenge from somewhere between Kidwelly, near Milford Haven on the coast to the south of the Preseli Hills and Abergavenny, in southeast Wales.It is thought that that the north eastern entrance to the enclosure was remodelled during Phase III so that it precisely aligned with the midsummer sunrise and midwinter sunset of the period. Outside this entrance another feature, known as the Avenue, was added to the Stonehenge landscape. The Avenue (probably a ceremonial pathway) consists of a parallel pair of ditches and banks stretching for 1.5 miles from Stonehenge down to the River Avon. It had previosuly been thought that around 2,400 BC the bluestones were dug up and replaced by enormous sarsen blocks brought from a quarry around 24 miles to the north on the Marlborough Downs.