

# Summer Solstice at Stonehenge

di Sarah Gudgeon

## 1. Read

Watching the sun rise is an amazing experience. Now imagine watching the sun rise in a place of historic and natural beauty on a very special day. The place is Stonehenge; the day is the 21<sup>st</sup> of June. Stonehenge is a pre-historic circle of stones in Wiltshire, England. Historians think it was a temple that was aligned with the movements of the sun. The big stones in the circle are called sarsons and the smaller ones are called bluestones. The sarsons weigh approximately 25 tons. Many archeologists believe that the sarson stones come from as far as 32km away, from the Marlborough Downs. And the bluestones, which weigh between 2 and 5 tons come from South Wales. How did they get to Wiltshire? Some historians think they were moved there by glaciers but some people think workers transported them by land and sea.

The 21<sup>st</sup> of June is the start of English Summer Time and is the longest day in the northern hemisphere. On this day, the summer solstice, people from all over the world gather at Stonehenge. They watch the sun rise together and share in its beauty, and for some people it is also a spiritual experience. During the summer solstice, *lithia*, the sun stands still in all its majestic glory. To find out more about the history of Stonehenge and life in Britain in the Neolithic Age and Bronze Age, have a look on the English Heritage website, or even better, organise a trip to this magical place.

## 2. Answer these questions.

- a. Where is Stonehenge?
- b. What is Stonehenge?
- c. What happens on June 21<sup>st</sup>?
- d. What is another name for the summer solstice?
- e. What does the sun do on 21<sup>st</sup> June?
- f. Where can you find more information about Stonehenge?

## 3. Design a brochure for visitors who want to go to Stonehenge for the Summer Solstice

## Teachers Notes

2.
  - a. In Wiltshire, England
  - b. A pre-historic circle of stones
  - c. Summer solstice/ first day of English summertime
  - d. Lithia
  - e. The sun 'stands still'
  - f. the English Heritage website

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/stonehenge>

3. Students can draw a picture of stonehenge, and then write some basic information either in sentences or in bullet points.