



Megalithic constructions  
in Europe– religious rituals

# Megalithic constructions



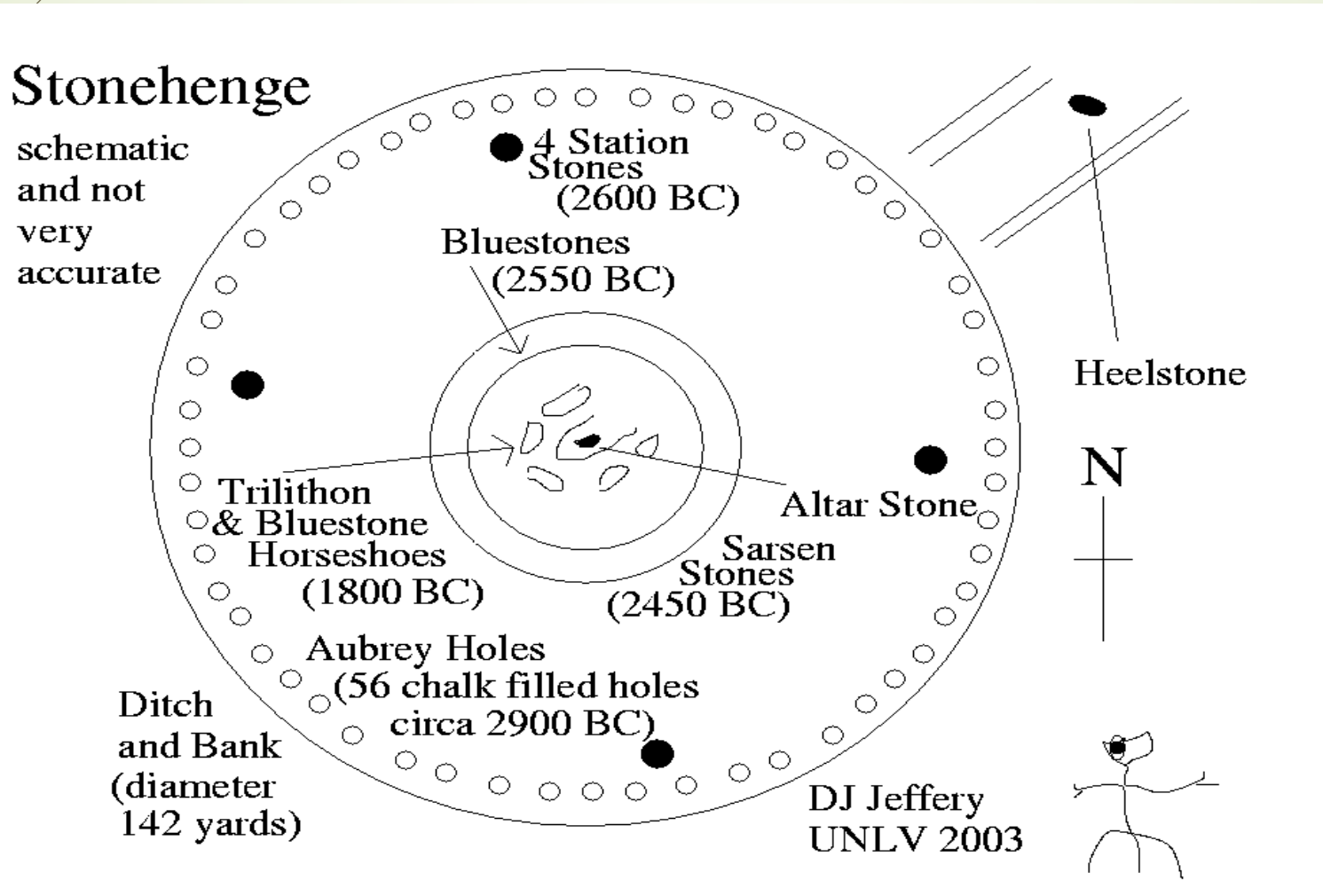
- ▶ England, Ireland, France
- ▶ The most common type in Britain – a stone circle
- ▶ Stonehenge
- ▶ Astronomical connections with the sun and the moon
- ▶ Solstice



# Stonehenge





# Structure





# History

- ▶ Built between 3000 – 2000 BC – various purposes - civilisation with no written records 
  - ▶ legends
  - ▶ burial ground
  
  - ▶ solstice and equinox points - rituals
  
  - ▶ a midsummer's morning - the sun rose and the sun's first rays went directly into the centre of the monument
- 



# Construction



- **Transport - prehistoric people - without the aid of the wheel - river**
- **ground - creating a track of logs - large stones were rolled**
- **a type of sleigh running on a track greased with animal fat**
- **experiment - 1995 - a 40-ton stone- 100 workers**
- **the 18-mile journey - from the river transport - successful**











# Legends




- ▶ Stonehenge - bluestone
- ▶ Legend - King Arthur – sent Merlin – 5th century and 15,000 knights to move the stones from a distant place
- ▶ not successful
- ▶ Merlin – special skills - stones removed from Ireland
- ▶ sent to Britain



# Significance



- the purpose – mystery – 1000 years significance
- Hypotheses:
- strong archaeological evidence - a burial site
- ceremonial site
- a religious pilgrimage destination
- a final resting place for royalty
- a memorial erected to honor and perhaps spiritually connected with distant ancestors



# Astronomical calendar – a new hypothesis

- ▶ In the 1960s - the astronomer Gerald Hawkins
  - ▶ megalithic stones - an astronomical calendar
  - ▶ phenomena - solstices, equinoxes and eclipses
  - ▶ critics - Stonehenge's builders – no knowledge
  - ▶ England's dense cloud cover – difficult observing
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- ▶ Recent theory – archeologists – signs of illness and injury in the human remains - bones
  - ▶ a place of healing- bluestones were thought to have curative powers



- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YNNkVzumhA>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf7xwHFuH2o>





# Other megalithic constructions

