

# A Research Framework for the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site

Research Agenda and Strategy

Matt Leivers and Andrew B. Powell



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Matt Leivers and Andrew B. Powell

with contributions by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger and Sarah Simmonds

Illustrations by Rob Goller

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*Front cover*

Stonehenge, trilithons 57, 58 and 158 with bluestones 69 and 70 and fallen lintel 156  
in the foreground © Wessex Archaeology

*Back cover*

Avebury, stone 103 of the Southern Circle © Wessex Archaeology

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# Foreword

In 1986 Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites was one of the small group of seven sites which were the first in the UK to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. I am therefore delighted to see the publication of the first joint Stonehenge and Avebury Research Framework on the 30th Anniversary of its inscription as a World Heritage Site.

Stonehenge and Avebury were inscribed as one World Heritage Site for their Outstanding Universal Value. The Site is recognised by UNESCO as a masterpiece of human creative genius that demonstrates the technological and engineering skills of a long lost Neolithic and Bronze Age culture. The World Heritage Site extends far beyond the iconic henges at Avebury and Stonehenge to encompass their surrounding landscapes, each containing an unusually dense concentration of exceptionally well-preserved prehistoric monuments. Both landscapes have a research potential that is internationally recognised. Over the last 30 years, great advances have been made in our understanding of the World Heritage Site as well as its protection and enhancement.

The UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention advise States Parties to make resources available to encourage and undertake research. They recognise that knowledge and understanding are fundamental to the identification, management, and monitoring of

World Heritage properties. The publication of this first joint Research Framework is an important step in fulfilling this ambition.

Historic England has been eager to produce a single Research Framework covering the whole World Heritage Site in line with UNESCO's recommendation to take a unified approach to managing serial Sites. In doing so, the World Heritage Site partners have built on the success of the earlier *Avebury Research Agenda* and *Stonehenge Research Framework*.

This new joint Framework is the result of committed and effective partnership working. The document is a true collaboration; the work of individual researchers, university academics, national and local authority staff, museum curators and private sector heritage professionals. The wider community has also had the opportunity to influence the questions being investigated through public consultation undertaken as part of the document's development.

This Research Framework will be available to universities and research organisations as well as the wider community. There is much here that will help to inspire and direct future research into these remarkable and unparalleled landscapes over the next 30 years and beyond.

*Duncan Wilson*  
*Chief Executive, Historic England*

# Abstract

The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site comprises two areas of Wessex chalkland some 40 km apart, connected by their distinctive complexes of Neolithic and Bronze Age sites. Both areas have played a central role in the understanding of Britain's prehistoric past and are among the most iconic and widely-recognised prehistoric landscapes in the world. Their international significance was recognised by their inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1986, and it is particularly apt that this new Research Framework should mark the 30th anniversary of the World Heritage Site's creation.

These volumes represent the first step towards the production of a fully integrated Research Framework for the Site. The first volume consists of an update to the Resource Assessment for the Stonehenge area, which extends the scope of the original version (Darvill 2005) to 2012. The second contains a new Resource Assessment for the Avebury area which incorporates the 2008 boundary changes. Both of these volumes explicitly expand the focus of the earlier Resource Assessments from archaeology to the wider historic environment. The third volume is a Research Agenda and Strategy for the whole World Heritage Site. The rationale for the form this Framework takes is complex, and is laid out in the Introduction, but it is envisaged as an intermediate stage between the separate documents that were originally produced (AAHRG 2001; Darvill 2005) and a single integrated assessment, agenda and strategy.

The new Framework is the result of consultation across the research community in its broadest definition. Authors were invited to produce resource assessments and technical summaries; workshops and meetings guided the initial drafts of the Research Agenda; the Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group (ASAHRG) provided criticism of both. Drafts of texts were presented for public consultation and comment via the internet. The Research Strategy was formulated based on their content, and the whole circulated for further comment. In consequence, the new Research Framework offers a guide that reflects the priorities and encompasses the views of the widest possible community. It is in every sense a collaborative document, produced by and for the constituency of researchers working within the World Heritage Site.

These documents are intended to guide and inform future research activities in the historic environment and, in turn, its management and interpretation. The intention is that they will be

underpinned by data-management systems that can be actively maintained as project-specific tools into the future. This new Framework, therefore, fulfils a number of objectives. It provides revisions (redrafting and updating) of the existing Avebury and Stonehenge resource assessments; it starts the process of harmonising and integrating the earlier separate research documents with the production for the first time of a single, combined research agenda and strategy for the whole World Heritage Site; and it develops a method to facilitate future review and revision. In future, this task will be undertaken by ASAHRG, which replaces the Avebury Archaeological and Historical Research Group to promote and disseminate historical and archaeological research in the World Heritage Site as a whole.

*Recent Research in the Stonehenge Landscape 2005–2012* consists of summaries of development-prompted research and problem-orientated research, followed by a section looking at recently changed and changing aspects of research: dating, long-distance connections, landscape structure, and the relevance of other monuments. *The Avebury Resource Assessment* provides both cross-period assessments of the resource based on a number of specific research methods which have been used to develop our understanding of the archaeology in the Avebury area, and a series of period-based assessments, from the Palaeolithic to the modern period. The *Research Agenda* articulates the significant gaps in our understanding, by posing some of the outstanding questions in a form that is relevant to a number of chronological periods and major thematic subjects of relevance to the unique character of the World Heritage Site. The *Research Strategy* sets out a framework of principles under which research should be carried out in the World Heritage Site, and identifies practical means by which such programmes of investigation can be facilitated, co-ordinated, resourced, sustained and communicated, and by which the Research Framework as a whole can be reviewed and updated.

The continuing nature of archaeological research inevitably means that many discoveries – some of considerable significance – were made during the period of the writing of these volumes. In order to bring the years of work which have gone into these documents to fruition, a line had to be drawn. That the Research Framework is not absolutely up-to-date is not a failing, but rather an indication of the need for a planned approach to investigation in an area which still, after centuries of investigation, has not given up all of its secrets.

## Abrégé

Le site classé au patrimoine mondial de Stonehenge, Avebury et sites associés comprend deux zones crayeuses, distantes de quelques 40 km, unies par leurs complexes particuliers de sites du néolithique et de l'âge du bronze. Ces deux zones ont joué un rôle central dans la compréhension du passé préhistorique de la Grande-Bretagne et se situent parmi les paysages préhistoriques les plus symboliques et les mieux connus du monde. Leur importance internationale fut reconnue par leur inscription sur la liste des sites classés au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO en 1986, et il est particulièrement approprié que ce nouveau cadre de recherches vienne marquer le trentième anniversaire de la création de ce site patrimonial. Ces volumes constituent le premier pas vers la production d'un cadre de recherches entièrement intégré pour ce site. Le premier volume consiste en une mise à jour de l'évaluation des ressources de la zone de Stonehenge, qui allonge la portée de la version originale (Davill 2005) jusqu'en 2012. Le second contient une nouvelle évaluation des ressources pour la zone d'Avebury qui incorpore les changements de limites de 2008. Ces deux volumes agrandissent explicitement le point central de l'évaluation précédente, de l'archéologie à l'environnement historique, plus étendu. Le troisième volume consiste en un programme et une stratégie de recherches pour l'ensemble du site classé au patrimoine mondial. La logique derrière la forme que prend ce cadre est complexe et est expliquée dans ses grandes lignes dans l'introduction, mais on l'envisage comme un stade intermédiaire entre les documents séparés qui furent produits originellement (AAHRG 2001; Davill 2005) et une évaluation intégrée unique, programme et stratégie.

Le nouveau cadre est le résultat d'une consultation de toute la communauté des chercheurs au sens le plus large du terme.

Des auteurs furent invités à produire des évaluations des ressources et des résumés techniques, des ateliers et des réunions orientèrent les ébauches initiales du programme de recherches, le Groupe de Recherches Archéologiques et Historiques d'Avebury et de Stonehenge (ASAHRG) fournit un bilan critique des deux. Des ébauches des textes furent soumises à une consultation publique et à des commentaires via l'internet. La stratégie de recherche fut élaborée sur la base de leur contenu et on fit

circuler le tout pour davantage de commentaires. Par conséquent le nouveau cadre de recherches offre un guide qui reflète les priorités et englobe les idées de la plus large communauté possible. C'est un document collaboratif dans tous les sens du terme, produit par, et pour, les membres du collège de chercheurs travaillant dans le site classé au patrimoine mondial.

Ces documents sont destinés à guider et inspirer les futures activités de recherches dans cet environnement historique et, le moment venu, sa gestion et son interprétation. L'intention est qu'il sera étayé par des systèmes de gestion de données qui peuvent être activement conservés dans l'avenir comme outils spécifiques à une mission. Ce nouveau cadre satisfait donc à un certain nombre d'objectifs. Il apporte des révisions (nouvelle rédaction et mise à jour) des évaluations existantes des ressources d'Avebury et de Stonehenge; il met en marche le procédé d'harmonisation et d'intégration des précédents documents de recherches séparés avec pour la première fois la production d'un programme unique de recherches et d'une stratégie combinée pour l'ensemble du site classé au patrimoine mondial, et il développe une méthode pour faciliter les prochaines revues et révisions. Dans l'avenir cette tâche sera entreprise par ASAHRG, qui remplace le Groupe de Recherches Archéologiques et Historiques d'Avebury pour la promotion et dissémination de la recherche historique et archéologique dans l'ensemble du site classé.

*Récents recherches dans le paysage de Stonehenge 2005–2012* consiste en résumés de recherches suite à des projets de construction et de recherches liées à un problème, suivis d'une section examinant les aspects récemment changés ou changeants de la recherche: datation, relations lointaines, structure du paysage, et rapport avec d'autres monuments. *L'évaluation des ressources d'Avebury* fournit à la fois des évaluations de la ressource à travers le temps reposant sur des méthodes de recherche spécifiques qui ont été utilisées pour développer notre compréhension de l'archéologie dans la région d'Avebury, et une série d'évaluations, concentrée sur une période, du paléolithique à la période moderne.

*Le programme de recherches* expose les importantes lacunes dans notre compréhension en posant certaines des questions en suspens sous une forme qui est appropriée à certaines périodes chronologiques et

des sujets thématiques majeurs appropriés au caractère unique du site. *La stratégie de recherche* met en place un cadre de principes en fonction desquels la recherche devrait être entreprise dans le site classé, et identifie des moyens pratiques grâce auxquels de tels programmes d'investigation peuvent être facilités, coordonnés, financés, soutenus et communiqués et par lesquels le cadre de recherche dans son ensemble peut être revu et mis à jour.

La nature continue de la recherche archéologique signifie qu'inévitablement de nombreuses découvertes, certaines extrêmement importantes, eurent lieu

pendant la période où on écrivait ces volumes. De manière à ce que les années de travaux qui sont passées dans ces documents portent leur fruit, il nous a fallu tirer un trait. Que le cadre de recherches ne soit pas parfaitement à jour n'est pas un échec, mais plutôt une indication du besoin d'une approche planifiée des recherches dans une zone qui, encore maintenant, après des siècles d'investigation, n'a pas révélé tous ses secrets.

*Traduction: Annie Pritchard*

## Zusammenfassung

Die Weltkulturerbestätte Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (Stonehenge, Avebury und zugehörige Fundstellen) besteht aus zwei 40 km voneinander entfernten Kreidelandschaften in der Region Wessex, die beide durch einzigartige Komplexe neolithischer und bronzezeitlicher Fundstellen gekennzeichnet sind. Beide Gebiete sind von zentraler Bedeutung für unser Verständnis der britischen Vorgeschichte und gehören weltweit zu den prähistorischen Landschaften mit dem höchsten Wiedererkennungswert und Symbolcharakter. Ihre internationale Bedeutung verhalf ihnen 1986 zum Eintrag in die Liste der UNESCO Welterbestätten, und es ist daher mehr als angemessen, dass dieses neue Rahmenkonzept für die Forschung zum 30. Jahrestag der Eintragung erscheint. Die vorliegenden Bände sind ein erster Schritt für die Festlegung eines ganzheitlichen Rahmenprogramms für die weitere Erforschung dieser Fundstellen. Der erste Band besteht aus einer Aktualisierung der ersten Version einer Bestandsaufnahme und Potentialeinschätzung für die Region um Stonehenge (Darvill 2005), wobei der abgedeckte Zeitraum bis auf 2012 erweitert wird. Der zweite Band beinhaltet eine neue Bestandsaufnahme und Einschätzung für die Region um Avebury, mit Berücksichtigung der Verschiebungen der Grundstücksgrenzen im Jahr 2008. Beide Bände sind explizit darauf angelegt, den Fokus der früheren Bestandsaufnahmen von einer rein archäologischen Perspektive auf die historische Landschaft als Ganzes zu erweitern. Der dritte Band enthält die Forschungsagenda und -strategie für die gesamte

Welterbestätte. Die Gründe für die Form dieses Rahmenkonzeptes sind komplex und werden in der Einleitung beschrieben. Es ist beabsichtigt, dass das vorliegende Werk einen Zwischenschritt zwischen den zuerst angefertigten Einzeldokumenten (AAHRG 2011; Darvill 2005) und der angestrebten ganzheitlichen Bestandsaufnahme, Agenda und Strategie darstellt.

Das neue Rahmenkonzept ist das Ergebnis von Rücksprachen mit einer so inklusiv wie möglich definierten Forschungsgemeinschaft. Die einzelnen Autoren sollten Bestandsaufnahmen und fachliche Zusammenfassungen liefern; zu ersten Fassung der Forschungsagenda fanden begleitende Workshops und Treffen statt; der Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group (ASAHRG) kommentierte beides kritisch. Erstfassungen der Texte wurden im Internet zugänglich gemacht, um Kommentare und Vorschläge der breiteren Öffentlichkeit einzuholen. Auf deren Grundlage wurde dann eine Forschungsstrategie ausformuliert und noch einmal zirkuliert, um weitere Kommentare zu ermöglichen. Somit bietet das neue Rahmenkonzept einen Leitfaden, der die Prioritäten und Ansichten der größtmöglichen Anzahl an Interessierten umfasst. Es handelt sich um ein in jedem Sinne kollaboratives Dokument, das von und für die in der Welterbestätte tätige Forschungsgemeinschaft erstellt wurde.

Die Dokumente sollen zukünftige Forschungsvorhaben in der historischen Landschaft, sowie deren Management und Interpretation begleiten und

unterfüttern. Es ist geplant, dies durch Datenverwaltungssysteme zu unterfüttern, die zukünftig als projektspezifische Tools aktiv gepflegt werden können. Das neue Rahmenkonzept erfüllt daher mehrere Ziele. Es bietet eine Neubearbeitung (Neuentwürfe und Aktualisierungen) der existierenden Bestandsaufnahmen für Stonehenge und Avebury; es beginnt den Prozess, die bereits vorhandenen älteren Forschungsdokumente zu integrieren und mit der erstmaligen Schaffung einer einheitlichen, ganzheitlichen Forschungsagenda und -strategie für die gesamte Welterbestätte zu harmonisieren; und es entwickelt eine Methode, die zukünftige Prüfungen und Überarbeitungen ermöglicht. Diese Aufgabe wird in Zukunft von ASHRG wahrgenommen. Sie ersetzen damit den Avebury Archaeological and Historical Research Group und werden historische und archäologische Forschungen in der Welterbestätte insgesamt fördern und veröffentlichen.

*Neue Untersuchungen in der Landschaft um Stonehenge 2005–2012* besteht aus Zusammenfassungen von baubegleitenden oder problemorientierten Forschungsvorhaben, gefolgt von einem Abschnitt zu kürzlich veränderten oder sich verändernden Aspekten der Forschung: Datierung, Fernkontakte, Landschaftsstruktur und die Bedeutung anderer Monumente. Neben periodenspezifischen Abschnitten, vom Paläolithikum bis in die Moderne, bietet die *Bestandsaufnahme Avebury* diachron angelegte Einschätzungen des Potentials der archäologischen Ressource, gestützt auf eine Reihe von Forschungs-

methoden, die unser Verständnis der Archäologie von Avebury vertieft haben. Die *Forschungsagenda* legt die erheblichen, noch bestehenden Wissenslücken dar. Hierbei werden einige der noch unbeantworteten Fragen in einer Art und Weise formuliert, die ihre Relevanz für mehrere der chronologischen Perioden und Themenbereiche darlegt, welche für den einzigartigen Charakter der Welterbestätte von Bedeutung sind. Die *Forschungsstrategie* definiert ein Gerüst aus Prinzipien, nach denen sich weitere Forschungen in der Welterbestätte richten sollten und identifiziert praktische Wege, mittels derer solche Untersuchungsprogramme ermöglicht, koordiniert, finanziert, aufrechterhalten und kommuniziert werden sollen, sowie die Bestandsaufnahme selbst überprüft und aktualisiert werden kann.

Archäologische Forschung ist von Natur aus kontinuierlich. Es ist somit unvermeidbar, dass viele Entdeckungen – einige davon von erheblicher Tragweite – während des Schreibens der vorliegenden Bände gemacht wurden. Um die vielen Jahre Arbeit, die in diesen Dokumenten stecken, zu einem fruchtbaren Abschluss zu bringen, musste dennoch eine Grenze gezogen werden. Dass das Rahmenkonzept nicht absolut aktuell ist, ist jedoch keine Schwäche, sondern zeigt eher, wie wichtig ein gut durchgeplanter Ansatz für weitere Untersuchungen in einer Region ist, die selbst nach jahrhundertelanger Erforschung noch nicht alle ihre Geheimnisse preisgegeben hat.

*Übersetzung: Daniela Hofmann*

# Introduction

by Matt Leivers, Andrew B. Powell, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger  
and Sarah Simmonds

The *Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site* comprises two areas of Wessex chalkland, 40 km apart, surrounding Stonehenge and Avebury (Fig. 1), that are renowned for their distinctive complexes of Neolithic and Bronze Age sites. These sites have played a central role in the understanding of Britain's prehistoric past and – together with their surrounding landscapes – have international significance, as recognised by the inscription of the World Heritage Site in 1986 on UNESCO's World Heritage List for its *Outstanding Universal Value*.

Over the centuries, research into these sites and the landscapes they occupy has taken many forms and reached many and diverse conclusions: about the people who used them and about how, when and why they were constructed. Some of that research contributed to the degrading of the archaeological remains and it is the awareness that this finite resource needs to be effectively conserved which makes a framework for the facilitation and direction of sustainable research central to the management of the World Heritage Site (UNESCO 1972, Article 5).

## Management Plans and Research Frameworks

UNESCO stresses the need for 'serial' World Heritage Sites comprising more than one area (such as Stonehenge and Avebury) to have 'a management system or mechanisms for ensuring the co-ordinated management of the separate components' (UNESCO 2013, para. 114). Although arguments have been advanced for the separation of Stonehenge and Avebury into separate World Heritage Sites, this possibility was ruled out in December 2007 when the Government announced that there would be no re-nomination of the World Heritage Site. The individual management plans – the *Stonehenge World Heritage Site Management Plan 2009* (Young *et al.* 2009), and the *Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan* (Pomeroy-Kellinger 2005) – have recently been replaced by a joint management plan for the whole World Heritage Site (*Stonehenge and*

*Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan*: Simmonds and Thomas 2015).

The two areas were also the subjects of separate research frameworks – *Archaeological Research Agenda for the Avebury World Heritage Site* (Avebury Archaeological and Historical Research Group 2001) and *Stonehenge World Heritage Site: An Archaeological Research Framework* (Darvill 2005).

The Avebury Research Agenda, published in 2001, was highly influential, being the first such document produced for any World Heritage Site. It was produced by the Avebury Archaeological and Historical Research Group (AAHRG), a group of professional curators, academics and freelance researchers who met to encourage, co-ordinate and disseminate research in the Avebury part of the World Heritage Site. A chronological and thematic approach was adopted in compiling the document, which consisted of individually-authored papers written by period and subject specialists.

The Stonehenge Research Framework, published four years later, was a significantly different document, reflecting the rapidly evolving thinking about the role, format and content of archaeological research frameworks. It, too, was based on the contributions of individual specialists, but it was compiled and edited by a single hand giving it a greater consistency of style and content; it also benefited from the availability of considerably greater resources for mapping and illustration.

Both research frameworks followed the tripartite structure recommended in *Frameworks For Our Past* (Olivier 1996), a strategic review of research policies undertaken for English Heritage. Each comprised a period-based *resource assessment* describing the current state of knowledge about the archaeological resource in their respective areas, a *research agenda* pointing out areas of research which could help fill gaps in that knowledge, and a *research strategy* formulating proposals and priorities for carrying out such research. Despite their shared overall structure, the organisation and presentation of these three main sections differed considerably between the two documents. Nonetheless, both shared a strong emphasis on archaeology rather than the wider historic environment.

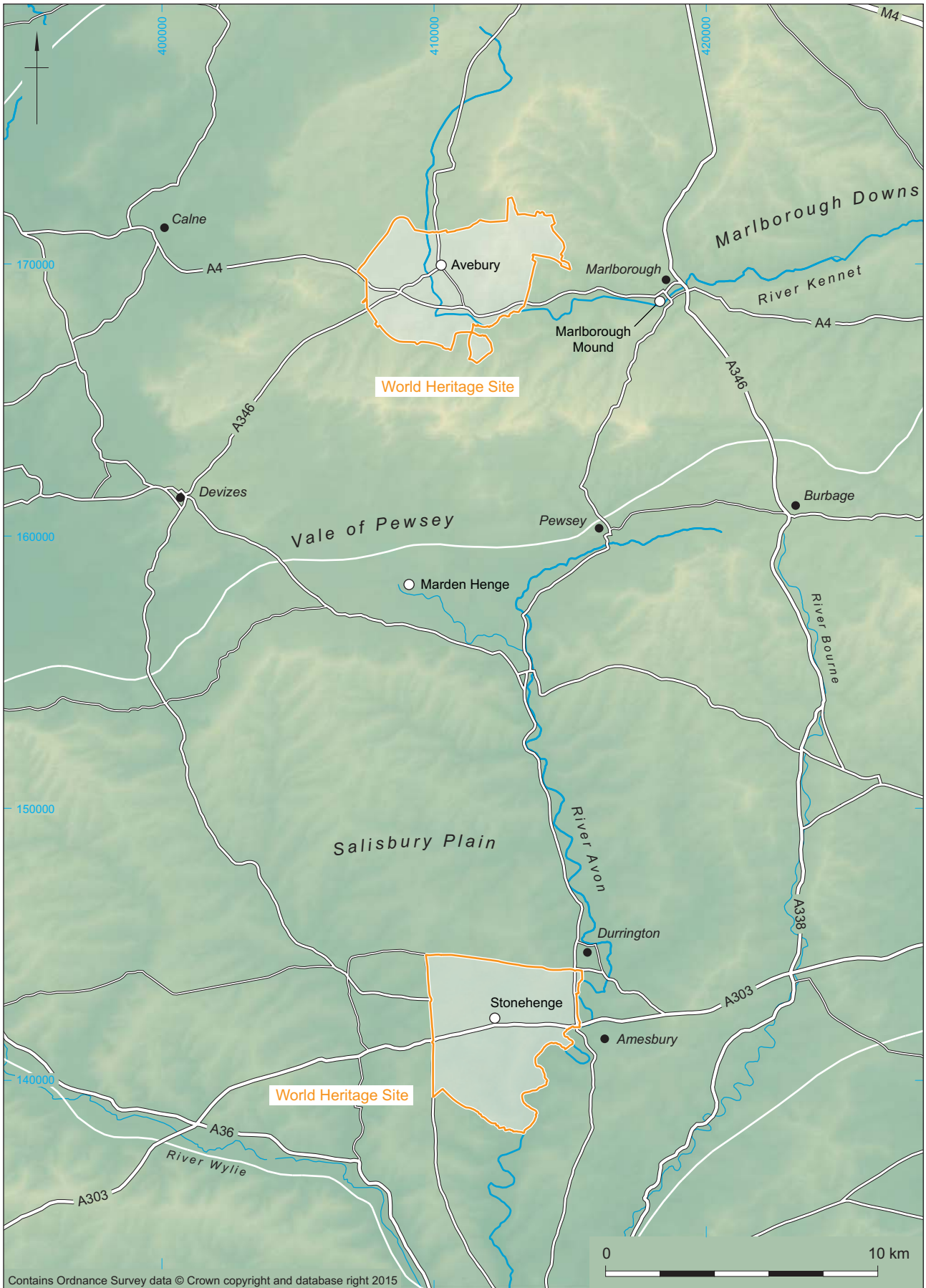


Figure 1 The WHS boundaries



## Review of the Existing Frameworks

by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger

Research frameworks are temporary documents, providing a point-in-time view of the state of knowledge, priorities and strategies for research as envisaged at their compilation. In the introduction to the original Avebury agenda it was stated that the document would be updated on a regular basis as research was conducted and new discoveries made, and as research priorities evolved (AAHRG 2001, 4). Similarly, the need for reflexivity and revision was made explicit in the Stonehenge framework (Darvill 2005, 32) which was anticipated as being a statement of research issues and priorities for approximately a decade (*ibid.*, 4).

Attempting to assess the relative success or failure of archaeological research frameworks is quite a challenging task. There are no agreed criteria for such an analysis, or a consensus on their value. There is a range of indicators which could be measured, such as how many research projects were undertaken, how many research questions were addressed, or how many new sites have been added to the Historic Environment Record (HER), but none of these are meaningful in isolation. In many ways it is easier to focus on what would constitute failure. In the case of the earlier documents for Avebury (AAHRG 2001) and Stonehenge (Darvill 2005), failure would mean that the documents were ignored and not used, which clearly has not been the case. The fact that there is presently a consensus that they need to be revised (and that funding has been obtained to undertake this process) can be seen as indicating a level of success.

The aims of both of the earlier documents were clearly set out (Avebury, section 1.3; Stonehenge section 1), and were similar: to actively encourage research into all periods, to improve understanding, to better inform other researchers, and to allow informed management to take place. Looking at the wide range of research and management projects undertaken since 2001 across both parts of the World Heritage Site, there is a good indication that many of these earlier aims have been addressed. There have been at least 10 major archaeological projects, and many other smaller ones, including the Silbury Hill project, SPACES, Negotiating Avebury, and others. These include both academic research and development-led projects, and both intrusive and non-intrusive fieldwork, and their results are outlined in the various sections of this document. It is apparent that the research frameworks have been referred to in fieldwork project designs, and indeed in bids for funding.

To what extent these projects would have been undertaken anyway, without the existence of the research frameworks, is difficult to assess; this was a

subject of lively debate during a Research Agenda Workshop held in Devizes in June 2011. What is clear, however, is the large number of new discoveries, leading to the development of new theories and interpretations, which have resulted from these projects. In many ways they have led to a wider focus on the prehistoric landscapes surrounding the two iconic stone circles. With the media attention that has come with some of the discoveries, there is now a greater public appreciation of the complexity and significance of these landscapes. While many of these fieldwork projects have been published, it is anticipated that in the next few years a wealth of new information will become available.

Despite this, we know that the landscapes of Stonehenge and Avebury have not yet given up all of their secrets. However, what has been discovered in the last 10 years will help us to ask more detailed and complex questions in the future, and within the aims and objectives of this new, combined research framework. The discussions, debate and communication within the archaeological community resulting from the publication of the earlier documents and this revised version, will continue to be hugely beneficial to our understanding and management of these internationally significant landscapes.

## Recent Research

Since 2001 major research has been undertaken in both parts of the World Heritage Site. This included survey, excavation and synthesis at Avebury and its surrounding monuments (Fig. 2), by a team from the Universities of Bristol, Leicester and Southampton (the Longstones and Negotiating Avebury projects) which had notable results, such as the discovery of the Beckhampton Avenue (Gillings *et al.* 2008). At Silbury Hill, English Heritage undertook conservation, repair and excavation, and the Romano-British settlement was examined. The ongoing Between the Monuments Project (a collaborative effort by the Universities of Southampton and Leicester and the National Trust) has been investigating the character of human settlement in the Avebury landscape during the 4th to mid-2nd millennia cal BC, and its relationship to changing environmental and social conditions.

At Stonehenge (Fig. 3) excavation was carried out in 2008 by the SPACES Project, while several well-known prehistoric monuments close to Stonehenge were investigated by the Stonehenge Riverside Project, which also discovered the West Amesbury Henge at the end of the Stonehenge Avenue on the bank of the River Avon as well as investigating Aubrey Hole 7 within Stonehenge itself. The Stonehenge



Figure 2 The Avebury WHS: places mentioned in the text

World Heritage Site Landscape Project (English Heritage) involved non-invasive survey of the Stonehenge environs alongside documentary and archive research (Field *et al.* 2014a and b; Bowden *et al.* 2015). The Stonehenge Hidden Landscapes project (by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, Birmingham University and international partners) has produced digital mapping of the Stonehenge landscape, revealing a wealth of previously-unknown sites via remote sensing and geophysical survey (Baldwin 2010; Gaffney *et al.* 2012).

Work on museum collections includes the Early Bronze Age Grave Goods Project by Birmingham University, and the Beaker People Project by the Universities of Sheffield, Durham and Bradford. Chronological modelling of the Stonehenge sequence has been revised (Marshall *et al.* 2012). Parch-marks observed during the dry summer of 2013 revealed the locations of missing sarsens 17–20 (Banton *et al.* 2014).

Practice-based research includes the publication of the surveys for the Highways Agency in advance of the proposed A303 road improvements (Leivers and Moore 2008), and further work associated with the

new Stonehenge Visitor Centre, including the closure of the A344 and excavations on the line of the Avenue beneath it (Wessex Archaeology 2015).

The landscape of the entire World Heritage Site and its wider environs has now been mapped twice as part of the National Mapping Programme (NMP): in 1997–8 from all accessible aerial photographs, while in 2010–11 that mapping was further enhanced via the analysis of more recent reconnaissance photographs and of lidar data (Crutchley 2002; Bewley *et al.* 2005; Barber 2016, Avebury Resource Assessment).

## The New Research Framework

by Sarah Simmonds

The path to the production of the Stonehenge and Avebury Research Framework has been a complex one. During the period of review and update of the Avebury Research Agenda (AAHRG 2001), which began in 2008, a number of key changes occurred in the management context. These led to the decision to

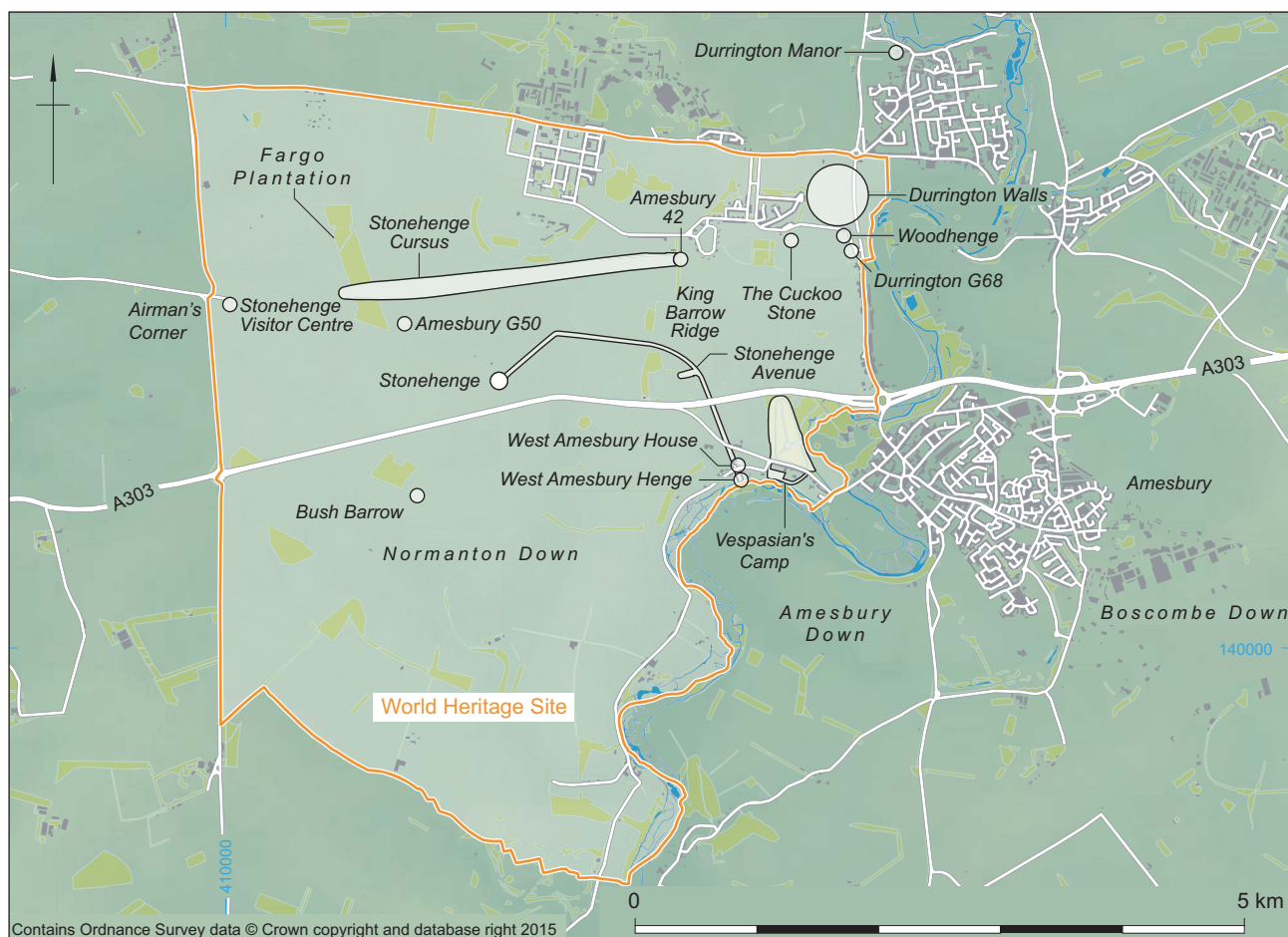


Figure 3 The Stonehenge WHS: places mentioned in the text

combine the Avebury document with the more recently-produced Stonehenge Research Framework (Darvill 2005) in order to create a joint Stonehenge and Avebury Research Framework. The decision to produce a three-volume framework was influenced by a number of factors, particularly the challenge of combining two very differently-produced resource assessments. This continuing difference in approach to the two halves of the World Heritage Site was in part a result of the funding criteria in place during the development of the joint framework.

A fundamental change in the management context was triggered by the governance review of the World Heritage Site in 2012. The review recommended a more joined-up approach to the management of the two halves of the World Heritage Site, and this had a significant influence on the decision to produce the first joint World Heritage Site Management Plan for Stonehenge and Avebury, published in 2015 (Simmons and Thomas 2015). Reflecting the move to closer working across the World Heritage Site the Avebury Archaeological and Historical Research Group (AAHRG) was expanded in 2014 to include Stonehenge and become the Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group

(ASAHRG). The decision to produce a joint research framework for Stonehenge and Avebury is part of this movement towards a more integrated approach to the single World Heritage Site.

Funding criteria for the production of research frameworks over this period also influenced the three



Incense cup, popularly called 'the Stonehenge cup' due to its resemblance to the circle at Stonehenge, found with a primary cremation in Bell Barrow Wilsford G8 (© Wiltshire Museum)



*Excavations beneath the A344 on the line of the Stonehenge Avenue during the Stonehenge Environmental Improvement Project (© Wessex Archaeology)*

part publication format. The process of updating the Avebury Research Agenda began in 2008 following a period of peer review and an online survey circulated widely among the academic community. A project outline was submitted to English Heritage on behalf of AAHRG based on the needs identified in the review and Wessex Archaeology was contracted to put together a detailed project design. Funding was agreed for new graphics and mapping and project management.

No funding was available for the production of the new Resource Assessment, which consequently led to this section again being produced by individuals on a voluntary basis. This approach provided the engagement of the academic community and in-kind contribution required by funders. An editorial committee made up of members of AAHRG was established at the end of 2009. The process of inviting contributors to update the resource assessment began in 2010.

The decision to produce a joint research framework for Stonehenge and Avebury – although very much in line with its recommendations – did in fact precede the outcomes of the World Heritage Site governance review. In mid-2010, revised English

Heritage funding criteria meant that support was no longer available for updates to existing research frameworks and it appeared that the update of the Avebury Research Agenda could no longer be supported. The idea of producing a combined Stonehenge and Avebury Framework was suggested. In addition to producing a consistent approach to the single World Heritage Site this would also constitute a new publication that would be eligible for funding. Funding was secured for the production of a new joint agenda and strategy but it was decided that the resource assessments for the two halves would still be considered updates. The Avebury Resource Assessment therefore maintained the approach of securing updates from individual contributors, while a brief update of the relatively recent Stonehenge Framework would be produced by the single author (Tim Darvill) who had produced the 2009 Stonehenge Research Framework. This approach was agreed by AAHRG who recognised both the necessity and the challenge of combining the two very different formats of resource assessment in a single joint framework.

Following completion of the Framework the project board decided to publish the Stonehenge and Avebury Research Framework in three parts to reflect the very different approach to production of the two resource assessments. The joint agenda and strategy section has been published as the third part of the Framework.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The new Framework is intended to cover the whole World Heritage Site, revising and updating the earlier documents. It is the result of consultation across the research community (in its broadest definition) and is intended to guide and inform future research activities in the historic environment and, in turn, its management and interpretation. The intention is that it will be underpinned by data-management systems that can be actively maintained as project-specific tools into the future. This new framework, therefore, fulfils a number of objectives:

- it provides revisions (redrafting and updating) of the existing Avebury and Stonehenge resource assessments, incorporating the 2008 boundary changes to the World Heritage Site, and explicitly expanding the focus from archaeology to the wider historic environment;
- it starts the process of harmonising and integrating the earlier separate research documents with the production for the first time of a single, combined research agenda and strategy for the whole World Heritage Site; and



*The chalk floor of a Neolithic building at Marden under excavation during the University of Reading's Field School (© University of Reading)*

- it develops a method to facilitate future review and revision. In future, this task will be undertaken by the Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group (ASAHRG), which replaces AAHRG to promote and disseminate historical and archaeological research in the World Heritage Site as a whole.

## Consultation

Since the revised framework was first proposed, various forms of consultation have been undertaken as to its form and content. Named authors were invited to produce resource assessments and technical summaries; workshops and meetings guided the initial drafts of the Research Agenda; ASAHRG provided criticism of both. Drafts of these sections were presented for public consultation and comment via the internet, prior to further revision and comment by ASAHRG and Historic England. Following their finalisation, the Research Strategy was formulated based on their content, and the whole circulated for further comment. The entire process was guided by a Project Board.

In consequence, the new Research Framework offers a guide that reflects the priorities and

encompasses the views of the widest possible community. It is in every sense a collaborative document, produced by and for the constituency of researchers working within the World Heritage Site.

## Geographical Scope

One problem raised by the 'serial' nature of the World Heritage Site, comprising two relatively small areas of landscape separated by a distance of some 40 km, is that of determining the appropriate geographical scope for its research framework (Fig. 1). The boundaries of the two areas are largely arbitrary, although the development in them of notable complexes of monuments does distinguish them from much of the intervening (and surrounding) landscape. Nonetheless, the density of archaeological sites and monuments more widely across Salisbury Plain, the Vale of Pewsey and the downland around Avebury does mean that research into the World Heritage Site cannot be undertaken in isolation. Indeed, the presence of a henge at Marden of comparable size to those at Avebury and Durrington Walls (and approximately midway between them), and of a mound at Marlborough comparable to Silbury Hill, as well as other monument complexes at

a greater distance, such as in the Thames Valley and on Cranborne Chase, indicates that many of the questions which can be asked about the World Heritage Site can only be answered if consideration is given to a much wider area.

However, the World Heritage Site lies within, and close to the eastern edge of, the area covered by the South West Archaeological Research Framework (SWARF, Webster 2008), which is bordered to the east by that covered by the Solent Thames Research Framework (STRF, Hey and Hind 2014). Together these two frameworks cover all the Wessex chalkland, which defines the wider landscape occupied by the World Heritage Site. Although they encompass much larger areas than the present research framework, they articulate many of the broader research issues, of all periods, which are also of general relevance to the World Heritage Site. They also cover some specific issues relating to the Stonehenge and Avebury monumental landscapes, and the other monument complexes in their respective regions.

For these reasons, it has not been considered necessary to impose another arbitrarily defined 'study area' around the two areas of the World Heritage Site. Instead, this research framework keeps a close focus on the World Heritage Site, while recognising variable wider contexts as appropriate.

## Structure

Although the new Research Framework covers the whole of the World Heritage Site, only its agenda and strategy sections have been fully integrated. Because the levels of revision considered appropriate for the two resource assessments differed so markedly, their integration was not considered possible at this stage. This framework therefore comprises a number of component parts.

### *Resource Assessment*

Not only is there at present no overall resource assessment for the whole of the World Heritage Site, there also remain significant differences in the organisation and presentation of the current resource assessments for the Avebury and Stonehenge areas, as brought together here.

### **Stonehenge**

The 2005 resource assessment remains current, but it is supplemented by an update on research undertaken since then, *Recent Research in the Stonehenge Landscape 2005–2012*, by the same author. This consists of summaries of development-prompted research and problem-orientated research, followed by a section

looking at recently changed and changing aspects of research: dating, long-distance connections, landscape structure, and the relevance of other monuments.

This update is available on-line via <http://www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org/management-of-whs/stonehenge-avebury-research-framework/>

### **Avebury**

The Avebury Resource Assessment has, for the most part, been completely re-written and expanded, and the new version replaces that contained in the 2001 document. As with the original Avebury Resource Assessment, individual authors provided papers on a voluntary basis, and not all conformed to the same template. In consequence, two (Romano-British and mid-late Saxon) are updates similar to that produced for Stonehenge, rather than full reassessments. In those instances, the original 2001 assessments have been included here for the sake of completeness. Most of the resource assessments were produced in 2011 and 2012, except for the sections covering environmental archaeology, GIS, the Iron Age, and modern Avebury, which date from 2013, the post-medieval and modern resource assessment, which dates from 2014, and the assessment of built heritage, which dates to 2015.

The resource assessment is split into two parts. The first, *Methods of Research*, provides cross-period assessments of the resource based on a number of specific research methods, old and new, which have been used to develop our understanding of the archaeology in the Avebury area. Descriptions of some of these methods, and in some cases assessments of the resource as revealed by them, were provided in *Part 5: Methods and Techniques* of the 2001 framework, as well as in a chapter on *Palaeo-Environmental Evidence* at the end of the original resource assessment.

The second part, *Period-Based Assessments*, represents to a large extent the complete replacement of the 2001 resource assessment. It now includes, however, papers on the *Post-Medieval* period, *Built Heritage*, and *Modern Avebury*, as well as separating the Middle and Late Bronze Age.

### *Research Agenda and Research Strategy*

The new Research Agenda and Strategy cover for the first time both parts of the World Heritage Site. In the tripartite structure recommended by Olivier (1996), as followed by the earlier Avebury and Stonehenge frameworks, these two sections appear to have quite distinct roles, the agenda describing the gaps in our knowledge and the strategy proposing ways of filling those gaps. There is, however, a degree of overlap between them, since some research questions cannot



*Fieldwalking in the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (© Wessex Archaeology)*

be realistically addressed until others have been answered. Finding answers to some questions, therefore, becomes part of the strategy for answering other questions.

There have been a number of guiding principles in the compiling of the agenda and strategy. First, an attempt had been made to make the document recognisable, as far as possible, as a progression from the two earlier versions, despite their evident differences in approach, combining both thematic and period-based components. Secondly, consideration has been given to the need for it to be in a form suitable for future combined revision. Thirdly, as the agenda is intended to be a working document of use to a wide range of audiences, the objective has been to give it a relatively straightforward and transparent structure; what it may lack in theoretical and philosophical sophistication, it is hoped that it gains in clarity and usability.

### *Research Agenda*

The purpose of the agenda is to articulate the significant gaps in our understanding, by posing some of the outstanding questions in a form that is relevant to a number of chronological periods and major thematic subjects of relevance to the unique character

of the World Heritage Site. The first part of the agenda outlines the themes which underlie the period-based questions described in the second. These questions are those generated during the process of workshops, consultation and comment outlined above.

### *Research Strategy*

There were significant differences in the structure and content of the two previous strategies. The *Research Strategies* in the original Avebury agenda comprised largely specific methodologies for answering specific questions, while the *Research Strategy* in the Stonehenge document consisted more of an overarching plan, made up of a series of objectives under a number of broad thematic headings.

The new research strategy has a number of aims:

- to set out a framework of principles under which research should be carried out in the World Heritage Site; and
- to identify practical means by which such programmes of investigation can be facilitated, co-ordinated, resourced, sustained and communicated, and by which the research framework can be reviewed and updated.

After considerable discussion, it remained of particular concern to the Project Board and authors that the Research Strategy was not prescriptive. Consequently, it is a deliberate move away from a document which prioritises particular pieces of research, instead offering guidance designed to encourage innovative research which exceeds the requirements of ‘best practice’.

## The New Research Framework’s Components

Although the individual parts of this present Research Framework document collectively cover the whole of the World Heritage Site, it remains an intermediate stage in the production of a fully integrated framework, and is on its own a necessarily incomplete document. It needs to be read in conjunction with the 2005 Stonehenge framework particularly and, to a lesser degree, with the 2001 Avebury agenda. Although some elements of the original Avebury agenda have been completely re-written, the cumulative nature of archaeological research and the re-iterative nature of research frameworks mean that these superseded components still have a degree of currency and value. All relevant components of the past and present frameworks, therefore, will be accessible online at a single location on the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site website (<http://www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org/management-of-whs/stonehenge-avebury-research-framework/>).

The new *Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site Research Framework* comprises the following main component parts:

- **Resource Assessment**  
Avebury Resource Assessment (Leivers and Powell 2016)  
Stonehenge Resource Assessment (Section 2: Darvill 2005)

Stonehenge Update (on-line)

Avebury Resource Assessment (Part 1: AAHRG 2001)

- **Research Agenda**  
Stonehenge and Avebury Research Agenda (this volume)  
Avebury Research Agenda (Part 2: AAHRG 2001)  
Stonehenge Research Agenda (Section 3: Darvill 2005)
- **Research Strategy**  
Stonehenge and Avebury Research Strategy (this volume)  
Avebury Research Strategy (Part 3: AAHRG 2001)  
Stonehenge Research Strategy (Section 4: Darvill 2005)

## Radiocarbon Dates

Calibrated date ranges were calculated by the maximum intercept method (Stuiver and Reimer 1986), using the program OxCal v4.1 (Bronk Ramsey 1995; 1998; 2009) and the INTCAL09 dataset (Reimer *et al.* 2009). Ranges are rounded out to the nearest 10 years.

## Lifespan

The lifecycle of this document is likely to be between five and ten years, parallel to the *Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan*, and depending on the pace of research in the World Heritage Site. The progress of research will be monitored by ASAHRG, who will determine when a further revision is necessary. The next version of the Research Framework should fully integrate both parts of the World Heritage Site into a single document.



# Part 1:

## Research Agenda

### Introduction

The Research Agenda poses questions about our current understanding and what we want to know. In order to advance our understanding of the World Heritage Site (WHS), a systematic approach is required for reviewing the gaps in our knowledge, for articulating the questions those gaps raise, and for outlining agreed future enquiries in the form of a workable research agenda and a strategy. The questions we ask concern not only the monuments themselves, individually and in combination, but also the wider spatial and temporal influences that they may have had.

Each area of the WHS contains a group of sites that together have played a central role in shaping our understanding of prehistoric society. The monument complexes, comparable in scale and diversity but distinctive in character, have made the wider landscape they occupy of exceptional significance, and both are regarded by UNESCO as being of *Outstanding Universal Value* (OUV). This is reflected in the scope and range of questions that they generate.

### *Outstanding Universal Value*

It was on account of the complexes of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments surrounding Stonehenge and Avebury that the areas were considered to be of *Outstanding Universal Value*

(OUV) and given World Heritage Site status. A full explanation of the WHS designation can be found in the statement of OUV in the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site Management Plan 2015 (Simmonds and Thomas 2015, 26–37). The Avebury area was extended in 2008 to include the surviving field systems on Fyfield Down, as well as to encompass additional Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments, a decision made in part on the basis of a stated link between the field system earthworks and the earlier monuments at Avebury (UNESCO 2008, Stonehenge (United Kingdom) No 373).

While there is an inevitable emphasis within this Agenda on those sites and archaeological resources designated as of OUV, it is fully recognised that the Stonehenge and Avebury landscapes are, like any other, multi-temporal in nature. Incorporating diverse elements of different periods that have intersected or coexisted in myriad ways, to ignore what came before or came after the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age would be to deny much of the context that constitutes the significance of these landscapes. As such, there are certain themes, for example the way that later communities responded to the physical legacy of the WHS's great monuments that naturally reoccur within different period sections. Other multi-period themes echo the broad temporal scale of landscape history, and reflect both commonalities and differences in the human story of the Stonehenge and Avebury areas, as well as the



*Excavations on the West Kennet Avenue in 2015 (© Between the Monuments)*

subtle but important distinctions that exist in the physical fabric of the two halves of the WHS. Within various period-based question sets there arises consideration of:

- the way that these landscapes, their topography and resources, helped shape human settlement at various points in their history;
- the ebbs and flows in the significance of these landscapes (they were not always special places);
- changing scales and networks of connectedness to other regions and places;
- points of comparison and contrast in the story of human activity in the two parts of the WHS. One virtue of the ‘split personality’ of the WHS is that it highlights the importance of developing understanding at various spatial scales, including the micro-regional;
- changing patterns in the origins, diversity, movements, demography, health, diet and conflicts of the populations that inhabited the WHS; and
- of how developing understanding of the archaeology of the WHS can contribute to broader disciplinary agendas on a national and international scale.

## Research Themes

In order to develop a coherent agenda for research specifically relevant to the WHS, six broad themes have been identified, reflecting different aspects of the unique character of these landscapes.

The six themes, and their overarching aims, are as follows:

- **Connected Landscapes:** to gain a better understanding of the complex monumental and mortuary landscapes of the two areas of the WHS – how and why they developed and changed; which elements of the landscapes were connected and how they were connected; how far those connections extended, and for how long they persisted.
- **Ceremonial Monuments:** to gain a better understanding of the social, symbolic and (in some cases) technological contexts of the communal and ceremonial monuments, individually and in groups – why they were built and altered; why they took the forms they did, and what they meant; what they were for, and what activities took place at them; why they were abandoned.
- **Burials and Barrows:** to gain a better understanding of how the Early Bronze Age mortuary landscape, dominated by round

barrows, developed from the Neolithic monumental landscape – the factors that determined the locations of barrows, and how cemeteries developed; their chronology and dating; the significance of their variations in form, scale, elaboration, contents and burial practices; their secondary burials.

- **Landscape History and Memory:** to gain a better understanding of the changing, long-term histories of the two areas of the WHS, and particular locations within them – how places came to be seen as significant; how their meanings changed over time, and how they came to be viewed and treated after their periods of primary use had ended.
- **Human Generations:** to gain a better understanding, from the analysis of human remains, of the generations of people who have populated the WHS – their origins, diversity, movements, demography, health, diet, and conflicts.
- **Daily Life:** to gain a better understanding of the changing, day-to-day lives of those living within, or passing through, the WHS landscapes, both as they related to the construction and use of its prehistoric monuments and separate from any involvement with them.

### *A: Connected Landscapes*

A common feature of the two areas of the WHS is the various forms of connectedness associated with many of their monuments, which give a degree of coherence to their ‘ritual landscapes’. Some monuments, such as the Stonehenge Avenue and the West Kennet and Beckhampton Avenues, deliberately and obviously link different parts of the monument complexes, or link parts of the built environment with elements of the natural landscape. Other types, such as cursuses, may make similar connections (although these can be of less obviously comprehensible form). There are also other possible connections, such as by river and other topographical and natural features, or by pathways or lines of sight. Connections are also evident in the construction of barrow and other cemeteries. There are questions about the connection between the Stonehenge and Avebury areas, and between them and monuments further afield in the region. Finally, the archaeo-astronomical evidence points to concerns with heavenly bodies.

### *B: Ceremonial Monuments*

The individual monuments forming the component parts of the Neolithic landscapes of the WHS vary widely in their form, scale, location and association.

Each has its own sequence of construction, modification and abandonment. Many of these monuments have been subject of intense and long-term investigation, but numerous questions remain about their changing appearance; their precise chronologies and sequence; about how and in what manner they were built. There are also unanswered questions about what these different monuments were actually for; what they meant to those who initiated their construction, built them, visited them and used them; the range of activities that took place within and around them; about when and how they declined, and what happened to them when they were abandoned.

### *C: Burials and Barrows*

Long barrows were an important component of the Neolithic monumental landscape, some having a clear burial function but others appearing to have contained no mortuary deposits. They are few in number in comparison with the numerous Early Bronze Age round barrows, which in parts of both areas of the WHS are the dominant visible features of the landscape (although again not all appear to have contained burials). Furthermore, similarly visible concentrations of round barrows are found both just outside the WHS, and at greater distances from it. Despite this, ‘very little is known about [the barrow cemeteries]. None remains intact, and yet none has been excavated to modern standards... Nationally, very few barrow cemeteries have been looked at in their entirety’ (Darvill 2005, 129). While this applies to both areas of the WHS, it is particularly the case in the Avebury area.

### *D: Human Generations*

Despite the unambiguous evidence for mass, co-ordinated human activity in the form of the large Neolithic enclosures, henges, mounds and megalithic constructions, the people who made and used these monuments are largely invisible and unaccounted for. There is a mass of burial evidence in the form of round barrows and other graves (both individual and in cemeteries) dating to the Early Bronze Age, but little is known about the occupants’ lives. However, the application of modern analytical techniques to human remains that have been recovered from the WHS have the potential to reveal much about the generations who have lived, died and been buried in these landscapes – about their origins, diversity, movements, demography, health and diet. These remains derive from centuries of antiquarian and



*Excavations over the line of the Double Bluestone Circle at Stonehenge, April 2008 (photograph by Timothy Darvill © SPACES)*

archaeological investigation, both in the contexts of the monuments and from later periods.

### *E: Landscape History and Memory*

Both areas of the WHS developed into centres of communal monument construction and ceremonial activity. Each, therefore, developed its own evolving history, by which these unique places would have been understood and given meaning. They would also have had wider significance, including understandings of each other, as well as of similar places in the wider landscape. Before the first Neolithic monuments were built, however, these might well have been landscapes imbued with meaning on account of their natural features and the patterns of activity undertaken within them; there are suggestions at Stonehenge that among those meanings was a sense of place stretching back into the Mesolithic.

Those histories of place continued to evolve during the centuries and millennia which followed the monuments’ falling out of their original use, as new functions were found for them, and new meanings given.



*Cordate hand-axe from Knowle Farm, Little Bedwyn, Wiltshire (© Wiltshire Museum)*

### *F: Daily Life*

While there has been an understandable focus of research in the WHS on those monuments which primarily define it, and the periods in which they were built, these monuments can only be understood in the contexts of the every-day lives of the population, and much remains to be learnt about the patterns of daily life. Such an understanding is essential not only for the periods of monument construction and use, but also for subsequent periods, from prehistory to the present, when different concerns came to dominate society, as reflected not only in the later treatment of the monuments, but also in new forms of communal construction and new forms of settlement.

## **Period-based Questions**

### *Lower and Middle Palaeolithic*

Research questions should wherever possible address issues set out in the *Research and Conservation Framework for the British Palaeolithic* (Prehistoric Society and English Heritage 2008), which built on the *Research Frameworks for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic of Britain and Ireland* (English Heritage 1999). Given the difficulty of framing questions that address gaps in current knowledge when that knowledge is based on such scant data, the most germane of these for the WHS would be *Collections and Records Enhancement* (Strategic Research and Conservation Theme 8). Three priorities for Palaeolithic and/or Pleistocene research then would be:

- A.1. The creation of an improved dataset;
- A.2. Establishing the nature of the palaeo-environment; and

- A.3. Determining the effects of climate on the formation of the landscape, geological deposits and periglacial features, including those which may have influenced later activity, such as solution hollows (a focus of activity at MOD Durrington (Thompson and Powell 2016)), and periglacial striations (argued to have been significant in the laying out of the Stonehenge Avenue (Allen *et al.* in press)).

### *Late Glacial and Mesolithic*

The lack of data from the Late Glacial is perhaps surprising, at least in the Avebury area, given its location at the headwaters of the Kennet. For the Mesolithic, however, the case is different. The large postholes in the car park at Stonehenge (and the single similar feature just beyond the WHS boundary on Amesbury Down) raise the possibility of the place having been a significant one for many millennia, while the evidence of long-term riverside occupation at Vespasian's Camp/Blick Mead shows the potential for Mesolithic activity across different parts of the landscape.

Research issues for the Late Upper Palaeolithic (Late Glacial) have been set out in the *Research and Conservation Framework for the British Palaeolithic* (Prehistoric Society and English Heritage 2008), and those for the Mesolithic in the *Mesolithic Research and Conservation Framework* (Blinkhorn and Milner 2014); both build on the *Research Frameworks for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic of Britain and Ireland* (English Heritage 1999). 'Primary research themes' in the Mesolithic framework to which the evidence from the WHS could contribute include the following topics.

- B.1. Living in a changing world: what was the impact of the human presence upon the environment, vegetation, and animal population? To what extent did environmental change impact upon Mesolithic technology and tool kits?
- B.2. Mesolithic lifeways: settlement and mobility: what is the range and nature of structural remains, how were they built and what did they represent?
- B.3. Investigating change and diversity: understanding the transition from the later Mesolithic to the earlier Neolithic: how can we investigate the character of final Mesolithic archaeology?

In the Resource Assessment for Avebury, A. George notes 'a lack of existing information... limited understanding of where archaeological deposits may remain, and a paucity of absolute dating evidence'

amounting to ‘a very fragmented data set’. While it is clear that people were present in the WHS during the Mesolithic at least, the scale and nature of that presence remains unclear. Thus, priorities for research include the following:

- B.4. A clear understanding of the climate, environment, vegetation and animal populations in and around the WHS, and in particular the hydrology of the Rivers Kennet and Avon: this will be a crucial tool to understanding of the landscapes of the Late Glacial and Early Post-Glacial periods.
- B.5. A better understanding of the nature of Late Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic activity.
- B.6. Further refining the chronology of sites, lithic industries and change.

### *Neolithic*

For the sake of clarity, the suggestions for future research follow the themes and order used by Cleal and Pollard in their Resource Assessment for Avebury. No particular hierarchy or precedence should be inferred.

#### **Settlement and Landscape**

One consequence of the understandable focus of attention on the ceremonial earthworks and other structures has been the neglect of smaller or less conspicuous elements of the contemporary landscape. As a result, there are a number of important questions to be addressed.

- C.1. Can we better characterise an earliest Neolithic (ie, pre-3650 cal BC) presence within the WHS? Does it pre-date the creation of monuments as current evidence would suggest? Does the earliest Neolithic owe a legacy to Late Mesolithic inhabitation of these landscapes, or does it represent a process of infill following a hiatus in occupation at the very end of the Mesolithic?
- C.2. While flint scatters offer our best evidence for where people were living and engaging in various productive activities during the period, their value has not been fully realised. Using scatter and, where present, cut feature settlement signatures (eg, pits and rare structural traces), can we develop a better understanding of the scale, tempo, duration and composition of Neolithic settlement areas in the WHS? Can we identify changes in the location and character of settlement areas over the course of the Neolithic? What form does domestic architecture take?



*Flint core from Mother Anthony's Well, Bromham, Wiltshire (© Wiltshire Museum)*

- C.3. What was the relationship between settlement and monuments? Did the location of earlier settlement and other quotidian activity influence the siting and form of later monuments? Could settlement traces become meaningful in the same way as monuments, as markers of place and memory? To what extent did settlement architecture influence or provide the prototype for monumental structures (as argued for Durrington Walls, Woodhenge and Stonehenge)?
- C.4. While knowledge of subsistence practices is relatively good for the established Early Neolithic (c. 3650–3400 cal BC) and latest Neolithic (c. 2600–2400 cal BC), thanks to substantial material, faunal and plant assemblages from key sites of these dates (eg, Windmill Hill, Durrington Walls), it remains relatively poor for other phases. Can better evidence for subsistence practices be obtained for the earliest (pre-3650 cal BC), Middle (3400–2900 cal BC) and earlier part of the Late (2900–2600 cal BC) Neolithic? Was mixed farming (use of domesticates and cereal cultivation) a feature of the Middle and Late Neolithic, or did the importance of cereal cultivation diminish, as postulated nationally?
- C.5. How do subsistence practices relate to monument construction? Did the demands of major monument building require an up-scaling in food production, or could they be sustained under normal productive conditions? Data from Durrington Walls supports a model whereby resources were drawn in from outside the region, but was this common practice? Are there special kinds of ‘monumental economy’ that differ in scale and kind from routine production?



*Peterborough Ware pottery vessel from West Kennet Long Barrow, Avebury, Wiltshire (© Wiltshire Museum)*

### Things

Many of the key excavated assemblages from iconic sites within the WHS derive from excavations that are in some cases three-quarters of a century old. While some of these formed the keystones of chronologies and type series, they are themselves now somewhat in need of re-analysis (as was undertaken with Alexander Keiller's archive from Windmill Hill: Whittle *et al.* 1999).

- C.6. A key aim is to better understand the chronologies of key artefact types and technological processes, especially those of the middle and earlier part of the Late Neolithic (c. 3400–2600 cal BC). Specifically, what is the currency of chisel and oblique arrowheads; of Peterborough Ware and its sub-styles; of polished flint and stone axes; and when does the shift from narrow flake to flake production occur? While these questions are of broader relevance (ie, applicable to southern Britain as a whole), the potential to addressing them using the archaeological record of the WHS is considerable.
- C.7. Can we better source lithic materials being used within the region, and so enhance knowledge of exchange and mobility networks? Are there significant flint extraction pits within these landscapes? Were more exotic/non-local materials being used in monumental contexts, and if so, why?

### Monumentality 1. Earlier Neolithic

The later Neolithic ceremonial complexes at Stonehenge and Avebury were not built in virgin

territory, but continued a legacy of monument construction that went back to the second quarter of the 4th millennium BC at least. Research into earlier Neolithic monumentality has been of variable intensity, with more sustained and larger scale investigation in the Avebury than Stonehenge landscape. This has resulted in certain of the Avebury monuments, notably Windmill Hill and the West Kennet long barrow, taking on an iconic, 'type site', identity, in a way that none of the earlier Neolithic constructions of the Stonehenge landscape have. There also exist differences in the kinds of 4th millennium BC monuments encountered within each of these areas: cursus monuments seemingly being absent for the Avebury region and megalithic long barrows from the Stonehenge landscape, for example. Issues for research relate to setting, chronology, associated activity and legacy.

- C.8. Chronology still remains an issue. There is a need to obtain more and better dates for long barrows, especially those in the Stonehenge landscape, and for the enclosure at Robin Hood's Ball. In some cases this can be achieved using existing collections material, in other instances it will require targeted fieldwork. What can be established of the duration of primary use of the regions early monuments?
- C.9. Through re-analysis of existing bone collections (from both antiquarian and more modern exploration), and targeted fieldwork, what can we say of the pattern and diversity of mortuary rites associated with the WHS long barrows?

C.10. What do we know of the locations of monument construction? Were long barrows within the WHS always constructed within existing clearings, or using locations previously occupied or utilised? Were they maintained clear of vegetation after their primary use or subject to vegetational recolonization (as hinted at with some monuments in the Avebury region: eg, Easton Down)? What can be inferred of late 4th and early 3rd millennium BC mortuary practices and their monumental settings? Do some of the WHS long barrows belong in this horizon? Is there a shift to individual burial?

### Monumentality 2: Late Neolithic

This period represents the *floruit* of the activity that produced the unique character of the Stonehenge and Avebury landscapes of the WHS. It is during the first six centuries of the 3rd millennium BC that some of the greatest monumental constructions in prehistoric Europe were created, foremost among which are Stonehenge, Avebury and Silbury Hill. By this stage we can infer that these areas had taken on a major extra-regional significance, and probably attracted groups and individuals from across the British Isles to participate in construction, ceremony or pilgrimage. Understanding what was happening in the WHS during the later Neolithic is central to the development of knowledge of the period for Britain as a whole.

C.11. Did monument building take place continuously during the period 2900–2400 cal BC, or were there significant hiatuses and other times of great constructional intensity?

C.12. The chronology of megalithic settings remains poor despite the scale of excavation at many sites. Can a better chronology be established for all of the stone settings at Avebury, for those of its Avenues, and for the Sanctuary? Can the chronology and sequence of the Stonehenge megaliths be better defined, and the date of the introduction of the bluestones be firmly established? Can the uncertainty attached to the current phasing of both Avebury and Stonehenge be refined? Can the source(s) of the Stonehenge sarsens be identified? Critically, we need to know whether all of these are of local origin (ie, from Salisbury Plain), or whether the largest derive from deposits on the Marlborough Downs and what this might tell of relations between communities within the two areas.

C.13. Linked to the above, it would be desirable to map the former extent of natural sarsen trails,

and develop methodologies or characterisation techniques to allow the location of stone sources used during the Neolithic to be identified.

C.14. The West Kennet palisade enclosures comprise a critically important complex, and one that might be intimately linked to gatherings structured around the building of monuments such as Avebury, its Avenues and Silbury Hill. However, their chronology and sequence of construction are in need of refinement. Is it possible to identify the range of activities that took place within the large spaces defined by Enclosures 1 and 2? Were those activities comparable to the gatherings and feasting events seen with the pre-henge activity at Durrington Walls?

C.15. What forms of social organisation might be inferred from Late Neolithic monuments? Is there convincing evidence of social inequality? Do social distinctions emerge from, rather than provide the pre-text for, the building of major monuments?

C.16. While clearly differing in the detail of architectural form, do the sequences of monument building in the Avebury and Stonehenge landscapes run in parallel, and indeed with other major complexes on the Wessex chalk (Knowlton, Dorchester)?

C.17. Are there sufficient differences in practices, material culture and evidence of networks to infer that the development of the Stonehenge and Avebury complexes was competitive (a process of rolling emulation and up-staging) rather than integrated and mutually coordinated?

C.18. Through material provenancing and the application of oxygen and strontium isotope analysis on animal and human remains, can we delineate the networks that underpinned the creation of these monuments? Was participation always extra-regional? How extensive and far-reaching were these networks?

C.19. Was the apparent up-scaling in monument construction in the decades around 2500 cal BC a response in part to the appearance in southern England of new technologies, lifestyles and ideologies originating from continental Europe?

C.20. What impact did monument construction have on the physical landscape: the removal of materials for monument construction (soils, stones, timber); erosion and the long-term impact on soils; and the creation of areas of land perceived as off limits/taboo?

## People

Further questions relate to human lives and the potential that exists to enrich knowledge through the systematic application of scientific analyses to skeletal material.

- C.21. Does the advent of the Neolithic mark the beginning of a major demographic transition? Is it possible to measure resident populations, and do those populations fluctuate, remain stable or steadily grow?
- C.22. What potential exists to better understand diet, health and mortality among Neolithic populations within the WHS? Can we detect differences across time and between specific populations (eg, tomb groups)? How do those patterns mirror or differ from the picture from other regions of the British Isles?
- C.23. What potential exists to document human lifetime mobility through the application of oxygen and strontium isotope analysis?

## *Beaker and Early Bronze Age*

Although there is evidence in the landscape for non-mortuary activity during the Beaker/Early Bronze Age period, including within the context of the Neolithic monuments (and, as at Stonehenge, of their continued modification), the archaeology of the period is dominated by the burial record. While this includes, for example, the Beaker burial in the Stonehenge ditch, the record consists primarily of the burials in the surrounding landscape, as reflected in the widespread distribution of round barrows, many of them in barrow cemeteries.

While a number of recent projects have begun to address some of the outstanding issues relating to barrows and barrow cemeteries (see Stonehenge Resource Assessment update), research is still most notable for its absence. Needham *et al.* (2010a, 1) note that the ‘limited amount of more recent archaeological work on this key block of landscape [the Normanton Down barrows] is surprising and constrains comprehension of the broader development of the Stonehenge Environs’. In the Avebury part of the WHS there has been even less systematic study.

Much has been gained, however, from analytical survey in terms of phasing between adjacent barrows, and even within individual barrow structures (for example, in the case of the First Monuments Project geophysical surveys of the Cursus Group: Darvill *et al.* 2013). The distribution of barrows around Avebury is very different, but a similar set of field projects and a re-assessment of archives of 19th- and early 20th-century excavations would be likely to yield valuable results.

## Chronology

Although the chronologies of individual barrows and barrow cemeteries remain key to their understanding, there are only four dated examples in the Avebury area. In 2005, Darvill listed 11 for the Stonehenge area, since when new dates have been obtained from Wilsford G1 (Leivers and Moore 2008), and from Overton G1, the first secure date for a Wessex 1 burial (Needham *et al.* 2010b). There is a need, therefore, to:

- J.1. Establish the chronology of individual barrows, and the phasing of their structures; and
- J.2. Establish the dates and development of barrow cemeteries.

## Relationships

Answers to the questions of chronology will aid in an understanding of the issues concerning relationships such as the proximity of individual barrows and cemeteries to the earlier ceremonial complexes, including viewsheds and intervisibility. These issues also require a consideration of the natural and cultural landscapes within which the barrows were constructed. They include the following questions:

- J.3. What patterns are evident in the spatial relationships between the locations of barrows and the existing monuments in the Stonehenge and Avebury landscapes, and how did these change over time?
- J.4. What was the nature of the local environment, contemporary land-uses and other activity in the landscape?

Another relationship to consider is that between the Stonehenge and Avebury areas of the WHS. Cleal noted that ‘in comparison to the area around Stonehenge, the Avebury and Marlborough Downs appear relatively poor in grave goods’ (2005, 124). This raises the question:

- J.5. Are the barrows of Avebury really ‘poorer’ than their Stonehenge counterparts, or is this an effect of different histories of preservation and investigation?

## Other issues

Darvill’s Objective 7, ‘Mapping the surfaces of the Stonehenge stones’ (2005, 128) has now been explored by a programme of laser scanning (Abbott and Anderson-Whymark 2012), which increased the known number of prehistoric carvings on the stones from 47 to 118. Dating (based on the apparent typology of the axes and daggers represented) places these in the period 1750–1500 cal BC. The issues still to be answered are:





*Macehead made from a fossil coral, possibly a sceptre, found with a male inhumation in Bush Barrow (Wilsford G5)*  
(© Wiltshire Museum)

J.6. Why these carvings were made, what did they mean, and what significance did Stonehenge have for the people who made them?

There is a need to improve the chronology of the burial record of the later 2nd millennium cal BC, given the number of Bronze Age burials that have been excavated in the area (Cleal 2005, 125–32). There is scope for further dating of:

- J.7. Cremation burials now that cremated bone is directly datable (and from very small samples); and
- J.8. Individuals buried with Beakers against the stones of the West Kennet Avenue, the Longstones Cove and the Sanctuary: this would clarify the history of the settings and of the interaction of different traditions.

### *Middle and Late Bronze Age*

Although some field systems may have had their origins in the Early Bronze Age, and round barrow construction continued into the Middle Bronze Age, in general terms the Middle and Late Bronze Age saw a major change in the focus of activity in the WHS (and beyond), with the end of major ceremonial and mortuary monument construction, and widespread establishment of permanent settlements within a clearly agricultural landscape. Evidence from the Stonehenge area includes much of the infilling of the Wilsford Shaft, dated by radiocarbon to the entirety of the period, as well as at least four settlements, two metalwork hoards, large areas occupied by field systems and crossed by linear ditches, and burials in flat cemeteries and inserted into earlier or contemporary round barrows. Virtually all of the evidence from Avebury lies at a distance from the core

monuments. However, the 2008 extension of the WHS took in the extensive field systems on Fyfield Down, at least parts of which are likely to originate in the Middle and Late Bronze Age.

The predominance of evidence for both Middle and Late Bronze Age activity at Stonehenge and Avebury lying at a distance from the Neolithic ceremonial complexes raises a number of questions:

- K.1. What was happening within, and immediately around the Neolithic monuments at Stonehenge and Avebury during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages?
- K.2. Does the present dearth of evidence for activity mean that these places were actually being avoided, possibly physically; or is it simply a question of lack of archaeological visibility?
- K.3. What does this say about the changing significance of these sites during the later 2nd millennium and beyond?

The spatial relationships between the Early Bronze Age mortuary landscape and later Bronze Age activities, particularly agricultural, also largely remains to be explored. One question is:

- K.4. What is the significance of the later Bronze Age field boundaries being either deliberately sighted on pre-existing barrows, or actively avoiding them?

Questions relating to Middle and Late Bronze Age land use are many. They include the following:

- K.5. What is the chronology of various elements of the field systems? When did they originate? Over what time-scale were they laid out?



*Inhumation burial in a pit in the enclosures at Scotland Lodge (© Wessex Archaeology)*

- K.6. How are settlements, whether open or enclosed, distributed in relation to field systems, and what was their chronological relationship?
- K.7. To what extent were the patterns of land tenure indicated by field systems new – or can earlier origins be identified?
- K.8. Can episodes of colluviation and alluviation be dated, and if so can they be linked to changes in land use?
- K.9. What was the nature of the ‘natural’ landscape during the later Bronze Age and what effect did cultivation have on it, especially in terms of soil fertility and erosion?

Aspects of the later Bronze Age finds assemblages also merit further research:

- K.10. Further work on the landscape location of hoards and single finds needs to be carried out, especially in the light of recent work in south-east England (Yates and Bradley 2010a and b).
- K.11. The Owen Meyrick collection in Wiltshire Museum demonstrates the usefulness of large-scale fieldwalking survey and, although a catalogue of this material has been published (Swanton 1987), very little work has been carried out on pottery fabrics or the depositional context of vessels.
- K.12. The significant assemblage of Deverel-Rimbury ceramics from West Overton G19 also remains unpublished.

The transition into the earliest Iron Age is also an area which requires further investigation:

- K.13. What was the level of continuity between the Late Bronze Age and the earliest Iron Age, and what was the pace of change?
- K.14. How was the landscape reorganised over this transition, and how did society change?

### *Iron Age*

In both areas of the WHS there is comparatively little evidence for Early and Middle Iron Age activity, especially in comparison with the Vale of Pewsey and the fringes of the high Chalk; and it remains the case, as stated in 2001, that the Iron Age of the WHS is ‘poorly understood’ (Chadburn and Corney 2001, 9). For Avebury, Fitzpatrick (2016) is able to list two enclosed settlements within the WHS and another seven in the surroundings, as well as a number of unenclosed settlements represented by pits and artefact scatters. None has been excavated recently, or subjected to dating programmes. In the Stonehenge part of the WHS, works in advance of the A303 Preferred Scheme in 2004 revealed an enclosed Iron Age settlement at Scotland Lodge, just to the west of Winterbourne Stoke (Leivers and Moore 2008).

At present the range of settlements within the WHS and their date are poorly understood and knowledge of the agricultural basis is limited. Only a small assemblage of animal bone was found at Overton Down X/XI and the work was done before the recovery of charred plant remains had begun. Important issues, therefore, include:

- L.1. Establishing the types of Iron Age sites present in and close to the WHS, and their dates (Chadburn and Corney 2001, 67);
- L.2. Examining the relationship between downland settlements and those in the wider landscape, including the Vale of Pewsey which became important in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. The regular identification of Iron Age 'A' pottery in and close to the Avebury WHS also merits further investigation;
- L.3. Gaining a better understanding of the material culture, including its chronology (Research Aims 11, 14 and 16f, South West Archaeological Research Framework (Webster 2008)); and
- L.4. What were the relationships (if any) between Iron Age activity and the earlier ceremonial centres?

### *Romano-British*

The Romano-British settlement at the foot of Silbury Hill is the largest known settlement of this period in the WHS, but much remains to be learnt about its function, status and character. As Darvill has noted (2005, 77) the density of Romano-British sites in the landscape around Stonehenge suggests that this area too may have been intensively exploited during this period.

By the Roman period, it may not only have been the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments in the landscape that were considered 'ancient', but also later prehistoric features, including hillforts, with Vespasian's Camp close to Stonehenge within the WHS, and Oldbury, just outside it but overlooking the Avebury area from the west. This raises a number of questions:

- M.1. How can we decide whether the later activity around these exceptional monuments was a particular response to them?
- M.2. Are there recognisable patterns of activity, including ritual/religious activity, at the existing 'ancient' monuments within the landscape, including Neolithic monuments, Bronze Age barrows and Iron Age hillforts?
- M.3. Are there indications that the finds, particularly of metalwork, from such sites were votive?

Given that ritual is so prevalent on all types of Romano-British settlements it is important to consider what criteria could be used to separate practice at those sites close to Avebury, Stonehenge and Silbury Hill from the background level of religion and ritual found on rural and roadside settlements

generally (Crosby *et al.* 2013, 281–2). If there is evidence for a particular response to the monuments here, does it differ from that seen on or around other, less spectacular, prehistoric monuments (*ibid.*, 283–4; Williams 1998)?

- M.4. How does the activity at earlier monuments compare with that found more widely in Britain (and in continental Europe)?
- M.5. Is there any relationship between the earlier monuments and the locations of Romano-British settlement patterns and land use, including burials and cemeteries? Does the proximity of the Roman barrows at West Overton relate to the Neolithic monuments and Bronze Age round barrows? Is there evidence that prehistoric monuments were seen as a useful source of stone for the construction of Roman villas (or other buildings)? If so did this affect settlement location?

The Silbury Hill Romano-British settlement is of considerable importance to the WHS, relating not only to an understanding of the pattern of settlement types within the wider landscape, but also providing clues as to contemporary perceptions of the earlier monuments. Questions arising from it include the following:

- M.6. To what extent was the location of the settlement next to Silbury Hill determined by the presence of that monument, and the proximity of Avebury? The evidence from the settlement would need to be compared with other roadside settlements before an exceptional response to its location could be inferred.
- M.7. Was there a Late Iron Age and Romano-British religious/ritual focus east of the hill?
- M.8. Where was the Swallowhead Spring in this period, and are there any structures or finds deposits associated with it?
- M.9. Does any evidence for the road frontage of the settlement survive?
- M.10. What farming, craft and economic activities were present, and where is the evidence located within the settlement?
- M.11. Are the higher status buildings further from the road?
- M.12. Were villas and higher status burials usually situated well outside the nucleated settlements?

The presence of the Roman road passing centrally through the Avebury area highlights the likely influence of communication routes on settlement and other activities:



*New Forest pottery and glass vessel from excavations on Amesbury Down (© Wessex Archaeology)*

- M.13. Were the buildings to the north of the Roman road at Silbury positioned along a north – south route at a crossroads of the Roman road and a minor or local road?
- M.14. Where was the river crossing in the Romano-British period? Was there a bridge? When did these routes and river crossing originate?
- M.15. What is the evidence for communication routes across the Stonehenge landscape, and to what extent were they influenced by the presence or locations of the monuments?

### *Post-Roman and Early Saxon*

Although there is limited evidence for activity in the WHS during this period, it has been argued that the Avebury area may have lain just east of the post-Roman frontier between the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons, with Oldbury Iron Age hillfort, just to the west, possibly playing an important role on that border. The changing relationship, in the decades after the Roman withdrawal in AD 410, between the native Britons and the Saxon immigrants, possibly

employed initially as mercenaries by British landowners, is an issue of general interest for this period, but of particular significance given the suggested presence of this political and cultural frontier. There are a range of research questions relating to post-Roman political developments:

- N.1. What evidence is there for the Avebury area lying close to a political and cultural frontier between the Britons and Saxons; what roles might the Avebury monuments, Oldbury hillfort, and the Roman road have had in the defining of political boundaries in the Saxon period?
- N.2. Although well outside the Avebury area of the WHS the construction of the Wansdyke would clearly have been a significant event in the lives of the local population, and much remains to be understood about its origins, purpose and development.
- N.3. What role did the Avon Valley have as a communication route for Saxon migrants moving into Wiltshire from the south coast, and how did this impact on the existing communities?



*Anglo-Saxon burial at Lake, Wiltshire (© Wessex Archaeology)*

While such developments are likely to be reflected in the settlement and land use patterns, this was a period of both continuity and change:

- N.4. Is there evidence that the patterns of Saxon settlement and land use were affected by the presence within the landscape of the 'ancient' monuments?
- N.5. What determined the locations of the early Saxon settlements, and any subsequent shifts? What evidence is there for continuity in settlement and land use from the Romano-British period?
- N.6. Is there any pattern in the relationship between the locations of Saxon settlement and the valley-sited monuments, such as Silbury Hill, Avebury henge and Durrington Walls?
- N.7. What range of activities was undertaken at or close to earlier, upstanding monuments?
- N.8. To what extent were prehistoric monuments, Roman settlements and other landscape features used in defining Saxon estates and other boundaries, and are they referred to in late Saxon charters?
- N.9. What is the character and extent of the Glebe Field occupation site excavated by the Vatchers?

Although the landscape was crossed by both prehistoric and Roman communication routes, some significant routes, such as the Herepath and the Ridgeway, may date to this period:

- N.10. How important was the Roman road between *Cunetio* and *Verlucio* in the Saxon period? What was its condition, particularly on the valley floor? What relationship might it have had with the Wansdyke to the south?
- N.11. Can new communication routes dating to this period be identified? What was their function and what role did they play?
- N.12. Is there any evidence that communication routes across the landscape were influenced by the presence or locations of monuments?

This was a period of changing religious tradition and burial practices, including the possibility of a continuing Christian tradition:

- N.13. Are there variations in the re-use of prehistoric barrows for intrusive Saxon burial, for example in different locations within the landscape, proximity to earlier monuments etc?
- N.14. A small number of burial sites discovered around Avebury belong to a particular

tradition, but where was the rest of the population buried?

- N.15. The 7th century decapitated inhumation at Stonehenge in Y-Hole 9 suggests that the monument may have been a Saxon execution site: is there supporting evidence from this or other monuments, and how might this reflect the marginal locations of the monuments?
- N.16. Is there evidence that rivers or other features of the natural landscape had particular significance, as suggested by the burial of a young woman, covered in planks, in a bog at Lake (Pl. 13), in the Avon Valley (McKinley 2003)?
- N.17. What evidence is there, in the relationships between modern, medieval, early post-Roman and Roman settlement and churches, for the survival or otherwise of Christianity?
- N.18. What role did prehistoric monuments play in the lives of Anglo-Saxon communities and to what extent were they 'Christianised' in the later 1st millennium AD, replacing earlier, and potentially very deep-rooted beliefs?

### *Mid-Late Saxon and Medieval*

It is unclear what influence the prehistoric monuments had on patterns of mid-late Saxon and medieval activity. The settlement at Avebury, possibly developing from a 9th-century defensible *burh*, was focused closely on the henge, eventually extending (at an unknown time) into its interior, and its study has the potential to reveal long-term trends in its development from the post-Roman period through to the end of the middle ages. In the Avon Valley, the village of Durrington, based around two manors (East and West), developed some distance to the north of the Durrington Walls henge, but Amesbury, just outside the WHS, was an important meeting place, royal manor and ecclesiastical site in the late Saxon period. It lies adjacent to an Iron Age hillfort, and royal itineraries would have approached it through a landscape dominated by prehistoric monuments. Such monuments may have had a variety of uses in these periods, therefore, reflecting the changing views of their origins and significance – as meeting places, markets, or even as places of execution or military conflict. Questions include the following:

- O.1. Is any pattern discernible in the locations of settlement and siting of burials, shrines and churches in relation to the prehistoric monuments, from which general conclusions can be drawn about how the monuments were

perceived and treated in this period, by the Church and the general population? Is there evidence that the standing stones at Avebury and Stonehenge were treated differently? This could include investigation of the Waden Hill burial(s) and their date, and the possible cemetery near the Sanctuary.

- O.2. Where, when and how did mid-late Saxon and medieval settlements develop? How were they internally organised, eg, with tenement boundaries? Is there evidence for settlement shift?
- O.3. Specifically, what were Avebury's origins and how did it develop – possibly as an earlier elliptical mid-Saxon settlement replaced by a late Saxon *burh*, or as a 'failed town', or as a planned village etc? Was there an Anglo-Saxon manorial centre on the site of the present manor house?
- O.4. What is the character, date and duration of the medieval activity indicated by the earthworks in Avebury Manor Parkland? What does this tell us about the development of settlement during the medieval period at Avebury? How do the dynamics of medieval settlement in Avebury and Avebury Trusloe relate to one another (if at all)? How did the existence of a church alongside a priory cell affect the relationship between the two groups of monks, the community and the landscape?
- O.5. What role (if any) did prehistoric monuments have in the delineating of land boundaries and communication routes, and to what extent were they impacted upon by them?
- O.6. What was the precise date, status or location of Avebury's first church? Was there a timber phase pre-dating the late Saxon structural elements in Avebury church?
- O.7. What was the nature of the late Saxon structure on Silbury Hill and the double-ditched possibly Saxon shrine in Avebury henge?
- O.8. What was the nature of medieval agriculture and animal husbandry in the locale, and how did it impact on earlier monuments and their visibility? Was there an extension of arable agriculture at the expense of downland grazing?

### *Post-medieval and Modern*

With a few exceptions, there has been little research in the WHS into the post-medieval and modern periods. While the development of the settled and agricultural landscape and its built heritage is, to a large extent, typical of the wider region, recent

centuries witnessed the growing recognition of, and interest in, the prehistoric monuments themselves, with the stones in particular increasingly regarded and presented – by antiquarians, archaeologists, artists, writers etc – as the defining features of these landscapes, giving them their distinct character. Increasingly, concerns over their conservation and preservation have exerted considerable influence over broader developments within these landscapes. There is considerable scope for the multi-disciplinary analysis of social, cultural, military and political aspects of recent history, using not only documentary and photographic archives and oral histories, but also archaeological techniques such as excavation and remote sensing.

The development of the WHS as an inhabited landscape over the last four or five hundred years shows many features in common with other parts of the county, and, indeed, with large areas of southern England. The difference, however, is that these developments took place cheek by jowl with monuments which even in the relatively uninformed past must have seemed strange, unexplained and perhaps intriguing to the landowners, tenants and labourers who shared this landscape. While much of the Stonehenge landscape was only sparsely inhabited, much of the later development of Avebury is more complex and still little-understood.

- P.1. The layout and use of roads and tracks has been little explored, to the extent that it is not clear in detail how travellers passing through would have viewed the stones at different times in history. In particular the road layout to the west of Avebury village and the apparent abandonment of a through route west from Avebury High Street is not well-dated or understood.
- P.2. The planting dates for the prominent tree clumps ('hedgehogs') which are so characteristic of the modern landscape, are not well established; these are often sited on round barrows and so are intimately associated with the monuments of the WHS.
- P.3. The history and development of the farms within the WHS and their associated built heritage is largely uninvestigated, the *Victoria County History* study remaining in large part the most recent. This is particularly of interest where the farms are closely associated with the monuments of the WHS, such as at Avebury, where the Manor threshing barn impinges on the henge to the extent that part of the bank was dug away to accommodate it.
- P.4. The close connection between the destruction of monuments and the construction of



*Late 19th-century collodion wet plate glass photograph of Avebury showing two large stones close to a now-demolished cottage (© Wiltshire Museum)*

buildings and other features has been the subject of some study, but there is undoubtedly more detail to be recovered which might alter current interpretations. Even some of those buildings which have been the subject of study (for example Avebury Manor) are not fully understood and in particular it is possible that there are physical traces of the buildings of the Avebury alien cell which are yet to be discovered.

- P.5. Water meadows (ie, in the strict sense of constructed systems to create water flow over grass) were in the past highly visible features of the landscape around the monuments, particularly at Avebury. The surviving traces of these are not well recorded and their history has been very little investigated within the WHS.
- P.6. The way in which the settlement of largely 20th-century social housing at Avebury Trusloe was established has not been fully documented; as much of the scheme was under the auspices of the local authority the potential for documentary sources to survive must be high. This could be investigated in conjunction with the history of the associated removal of houses from the historic centre of Avebury village, where they lay within the henge.
- P.7. The small details of landscape and streetscape within the WHS would merit investigation and record, from the details of, for example, ancient walls, gate piers, and areas of sarsen setts, to more modern features which change or disappear with the rapidity so characteristic of modern life. The WHS allows an opportunity for recording material aspects of life among the monuments which are more transient than



*Detail of a watercolour by P Crocker, allegedly of William Cunnington and Sir Richard Colt Hoare overseeing the opening of one of the Normanton barrows south of Stonehenge, c. 1810 (© Wiltshire Museum)*

appears the case to the contemporary observer but which are of value in adding to the long historical record of use of these remarkable landscapes.

The military has had a significant impact on the landscape for more than a century, with training on Salisbury Plain, the Ministry of Defence's main training area in the UK, expanding particularly during the First and Second World Wars and continuing today.

- P.8. How has the military presence in both parts of the WHS developed?
- P.9. What physical and social impacts has the military had on the monuments, landscape, airtape and audio/auralscapes of the WHS?

For many decades both parts of the WHS have been the focus of attention and gatherings, often counter-culture and anti-establishment, frequently for reasons indirectly related to orthodox archaeological opinion as to the origins, meaning and significance of the monuments themselves.

- P.10. Why have these two landscapes, and particular sites within them, become the focus for such attention, and what do they represent to people to enable them to express such varied visions and perspectives of modern needs and of past histories?
- P.11. To what extent is orthodox archaeological knowledge reflected in the wider beliefs of these groups?
- P.12. As such groups do not exist in a vacuum, to what extent do their ideas, beliefs and practices reflect wider socio-cultural concerns and developments?

- P.13. What permanent markings, and material culture, have such gatherings left on the landscape and on the monuments?

The landscapes of both parts of the WHS have been repeatedly transformed in recent centuries, reflecting the change in vision of what is considered an appropriate setting, and leading both to what we see today and plans for managing future developments.

- P.14. What archaeological remains survive from the removal of buildings (such as the First World War aerodrome and the late 1920s café at Stonehenge) and other features in order to create the modern interpretation of prehistoric landscapes; and what were the underlying theoretical, cultural and social influences that led to the creation of the resulting (and other) earthworks?
- P.15. What drove the changing understandings and interpretations of these landscapes?
- P.16. What was the impact on local communities at both Stonehenge and Avebury of people being moved, and having their homes demolished, in order to help create settings for the stones?
- P.17. What was the theoretical basis, and the broader context, for the considerable amount of restoration work that has taken place alongside the excavations within the WHS in the 20th century, in particular at Stonehenge and Avebury themselves?

Despite the volume of work undertaken focused on the records of and finds from past excavations, as well as historic and recent survey work, there has been limited research into the history of antiquarian and archaeological endeavour within the WHS (Pl. 15).

- P.18. What can we tell, by reappraising the practices of early antiquaries through analysis of re-excavated trenches and sondages, about how they encountered and investigated the monuments?
- P.19. What have been the dynamics of the relationships between antiquaries and the occupants of the Stonehenge and Avebury landscapes; between native residents and settlers (eg, military and associated personnel and trades); and between residents and visitors, especially those visiting the monuments?

A programme to record and preserve an oral personal and social history of 20th-century archaeological research in the WHS would be of value. In addition, research should be undertaken



into the impact of World Heritage Designation on local communities and land use; and on perceptions among local communities of that impact.

- P.20. What effect has WHS status had on archaeological research and the preservation and conservation of archaeological and historic sites, on development carried out in the context of the planning process, and on the military use of the landscapes?
- P.21. What has been the impact on people and communities, and on the conservation and protection of sites and structures of later date, bearing in mind that the World Heritage Site's OUV is acknowledged because of the importance of its Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments?
- P.22. What has been the impact of the WHS on research in the rest of the county?
- P.23. What is the circulation and hierarchy of interpretations of Stonehenge and Avebury throughout history, and how have individuals and groups reacted to these interpretations? What do we know of the relationship between artists and writers and the landscape, and between architects and designers and the monuments? What does the poetry and music associated with Stonehenge and Avebury tell us of the times in which authors and composers

visited? Why are Avebury and Silbury adopted as titles for places, products, services and businesses that have no apparent relationship with the WHS?

## Conclusion

The research themes outlined above are not intended to be an exhaustive list of unanswered questions or suggested research proposals. What they are intended to provide is an indication of the wide range of possibilities which the rich archaeological resource of the WHS has to answer important questions about the past (and hence the present), not only within the landscapes of the WHS itself, but also within wider national and international contexts.

Which avenues of research will be followed will depend on many factors, including individual interests, available technologies and adequate funding, and it has not been the purpose of the Agenda to prioritise some research questions above others. Nonetheless, the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site enhances the value and significance of all the archaeological remains within it, and requires that any research undertaken here is subject to the highest standards. The Research Strategy which follows provides a framework for that research, with respect to its formulation, planning and conduct, and in the dissemination of its results

# Part 2:

## Research Strategy

### Introduction

The first two parts of this Research Framework for the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site have provided an overview of the current state of knowledge about the cultural heritage of the whole of the WHS: the Resource Assessment has summarised its unique archaeological and historical resource; and the Research Agenda has articulated some of the wide range of questions that remain to be answered. These questions relate both to those characteristics which imbue the WHS with its Outstanding Universal Value, and to its wider archaeological and historical contexts.

This third section, the Research Strategy, provides a structure for advancing the Research Agenda for the next five to ten years. It does so first by outlining a set of core principles under which future research within the WHS should be conducted; and secondly by offering a set of strategies which underpin these principles and provide direction and guidance to those co-ordinating, undertaking, monitoring and funding the research, and to other stakeholders.

The Research Strategy, therefore, has as its key aims:

- to promote and facilitate innovative research of the highest quality in the WHS which will both protect and enhance the site and its attributes of OUV, and contribute to its management;
- to set out the core principles (incorporating best practice, innovation, sustainability, and communication and engagement), which will guide the conduct of research projects;
- to promote collaboration and co-ordination within the research community of the WHS, by agreeing a process that will guide the planning, funding, conduct and dissemination of research projects; and
- to establish a process by which the Research Framework, and its component parts, can be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

### Research Principles

There are four principles which should underpin the conduct of all research undertaken within the WHS. While these are, in general terms, of wider relevance to archaeological research, the OUV of the WHS gives them particular weight and significance.

#### *1. Best Practice*

**All research undertaken within the WHS should follow best practice.**

The unique resource of the WHS demands that any research, whether using intrusive or non-intrusive methods, should be of the highest quality and undertaken in accordance with the principle of best practice. Where appropriate this should aim to exceed industry-accepted minimum standards, as established by national bodies and set out in professional codes and guidance (see Appendix 1), or standards as enshrined in local and national legislation.

#### *2. Sustainability*

**All research undertaken within the WHS must be sustainable in the long term.**

Intrusive methods of archaeological investigation, whether in the field or on materials in museum archives, have varying levels of impact on the archaeological resource of the WHS. However, unlike other impacts, such as agriculture, development and other processes, which continually reduce and degrade the resource, archaeological research can and should enhance it.

In one sense, the archaeological resource is finite. In another, it is growing, as new surveys and excavations reveal previously-unknown sites or increase knowledge of known sites. Sustainable research can enhance its value by advancing our understanding of it; both established methods and the development of new research techniques can



*Multi-sensor hand-cart gradiometer at Avebury, July 2013 (Photography by Timothy Darvill © Bournemouth University and Deutsches Archäologisches Institut)*

substantially increase its potential to provide knowledge, by refining methods and opening up new avenues of enquiry.

It is essential however to carefully balance the potential furthering of understanding against any adverse or destructive effects of the work undertaken (Strategic Objective 2.7).

The planning of research projects which propose to impact directly on the archaeological resource (either by excavation or other non-repeatable methods of investigation) need to have sound research objectives consistent with these principles of research, and to justify their methods as being the most appropriate for the task at hand.

### 3. Innovation

**Research undertaken within the WHS should seek to inspire and refine new methods of investigation, analysis and dissemination.**

The WHS offers a particularly important resource for researchers, as reflected in its OUV, a fact recognised since the earliest antiquaries started studying the monuments now within it. Its potential has been a significant catalyst for the development of archaeological practice, not only as a test-bed for new

methods of fieldwork (both intrusive and non-intrusive), but also for new techniques of scientific investigation and analysis, the refining of chronologies, and the development of new theoretical approaches to understanding the past.

Research in the WHS should continue to inspire innovation in the investigation of archaeology and cultural heritage, wherever appropriate and sustainable.

### 4. Communication and Engagement

**All research undertaken within the WHS should be disseminated in order to facilitate future research and promote public engagement.**

The results of all research projects need to be easily accessible and available to the widest possible audience. Research that does not lead to publication or the deposition of datasets in accessible repositories does not meet the requirements of best practice. Consequently it should be a requirement that the results of all research undertaken in the WHS be made available without undue delay. All reports for fieldwork – whether interim or final – must be lodged with the HER at the earliest possible time.

The OUV of the WHS implies that the understanding and appreciation of the archaeological remains is of interest and significance to different audiences. The investment of the WHS with a range of aesthetic values and diverse significance to a variety of communities predates its inscription.

Clear communication and public engagement should be central to any research project. Public engagement (where this would be of some benefit) should be at all stages of a project, and should be followed by prompt and appropriate dissemination of the results of the research through publications and other media.

The public's appreciation of the WHS may also be promoted (where appropriate and with suitable guidance) through its participation in the research process itself. This will provide a better understanding of how the evidence is gathered and upon which an informed understanding about the past is based, given that there are widely variable public perceptions about the origins, purposes and current significance of the WHS, its landscape and the monuments within it.

## Strategies

In order to progress research in accordance with the core principles outlined above, it is necessary to establish a number of strategies which provide researchers and other stakeholders with a practical framework for the planning, conduct and dissemination of research.

### 1. *The Development of Research Projects*

**Research projects undertaken within the WHS should conform to agreed procedures in their planning and conduct.**

In order to ensure that research projects in the WHS embody the principles outlined above it is important that researchers take all necessary steps to consult with and, where required, obtain permission from the appropriate bodies. There is a set of basic steps which researchers should follow in the development and conduct of their projects, although the precise steps necessary will vary from project to project.

A wide range of stakeholders have interests in the conduct of research projects in the WHS. Even where no formal permissions are required, researchers should take those interests into account when planning, developing, implementing and disseminating their projects.

The policy regarding the use of metal detectors laid out in the 2001 *Archaeological Research Agenda for the Avebury World Heritage Site* should be maintained across the WHS as a whole (AAHRG 2001, 90–1). In summary, this policy recommends that:

- metal detectors are only used in a controlled fashion and within the terms of a project design;
- metal detectors should not be used on known archaeological sites other than as part of an archaeological project; and



*Excavations at Marden during the University of Reading's Field School (© University of Reading)*

- metal detectors should not be used on archaeologically ‘blank’ areas other than as part of an archaeological survey.
- Landowners and detectorists should seek further advice from the appropriate bodies (see below).

Also, research within the WHS is diverse in its scope and practice, being undertaken by a wide range of individuals and organisations within the contexts of academic enquiry, commercial development, and site management and protection. As such, different forms of research may require different levels of permissions as they fall under different regimes of statutory and non-statutory control.

The main stakeholder organisations and their roles are:

- *Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS)* which has a duty of identifying, recording and protecting Wiltshire’s archaeology; of advising planning departments; negotiating with landowners and developers; and maintaining the Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record (WSHER).

WCAS should be the main point of contact when undertaking investigations within the WHS, as it offers advice at all stages of investigation, including the planning of projects, consultation of the WSHER as part of background research, the production of project designs, the determination of appropriate methodologies, and the dissemination of results.

- *Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group (ASAHRG)* has an advisory role in promoting, guiding and disseminating information about historical and archaeological research in the WHS, as well as one of coordinating and maintaining the Research Framework.

Early contact should be made with ASAHRG whose diverse membership, which includes professional curators, academics and freelance researchers, many with past experience of investigation, provides an unparalleled knowledge-base about the WHS along with a platform for discussion and feedback.

ASAHRG would also provide prospective researchers with contact information for the relevant statutory and other organisations, including English Heritage, National Trust, museums etc., and any other landowners whose permission would be needed.

- *The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission* is responsible for the management of Stonehenge and the Guardianship sites at Avebury on behalf

of the Secretary of State; and the English Heritage Trust is licensed to carry out this responsibility (at Avebury the National Trust assist with these responsibilities under a Local Management Agreement). Consent must be obtained from the Commission via Historic England for any works affecting a Scheduled Monument.

- *The National Trust* owns and cares for just over one third of the WHS at both Stonehenge and Avebury (3700 acres) including many of the major monuments. Their permission is required for any fieldwork on their land and will only be granted under a National Trust Archaeological Research Agreement. Metal detecting is not permitted on National Trust land unless it forms part of such an Agreement.
- *Salisbury Museum, Wiltshire Museum* (Devizes) and the *Alexander Keiller Museum* (Avebury), as well as other museums, hold material and archives resulting from past research within the WHS. Salisbury Museum is the repository for material from Stonehenge and south Wiltshire; the Alexander Keiller Museum the repository for material from the Avebury part of the WHS; while the Wiltshire Museum is the repository for material from other parts of the county.

### Strategic objectives

In order to ensure the development of high quality research projects consistent with the research principles outlined above and the appropriateness and sustainability of results, eight strategic objectives are identified:

- 1.1. There should be provision for sufficient and appropriate long-term storage space for finds and archives resulting from research projects.
- 1.2. Research undertaken within the WHS should be preceded by consultation with WCAS and ASAHRG, and any other relevant parties; and appropriate permissions, both statutory and non-statutory, should be acquired at an early stage from the relevant body and landowners.
- 1.3. Research projects should be preceded where appropriate by a written Project Design that is consistent with the Principles of Research outlined above. This should be seen and discussed by all relevant stakeholders. It should contain clear and well-defined research objectives and a methodology that reflects how these objectives will be obtained.
- 1.4. Project designs should specify where any project archive will be deposited, following consultation with the receiving institution, and

should include a commitment to submit an OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationsS) entry and digital data and final reports to the WSHER.

- 1.5. Project Designs should refer to this Research Framework, as well as to other regional and national research frameworks. These frameworks are not prescriptive; well-reasoned research projects that are beyond their current scope can contribute to their updating and revision.
- 1.6. All research should have adequate funding in advance of the start of the project, including that needed to cover post-excavation analyses, publication and archiving.
- 1.7. All personnel undertaking research in the WHS should be suitably qualified, and have the necessary skills to undertake the project set out in the Project Design, or have sought qualified guidance from people with those skills.
- 1.8. Collections-based research projects should deposit their results, including analyses, with the museums to ensure that future researchers have full access to them, so reducing the risk of repetition of destructive analyses.

## 2. Implementation

**Appropriate research methods should be employed, consistent with the principles of best practice and sustainability.**

A wide range of techniques, archaeological and non-archaeological, has been employed in the investigation of the monuments and landscape of the WHS, as well as their aesthetic, artistic and communal values. Recent years have seen rapid advances in the areas of remote sensing and survey,



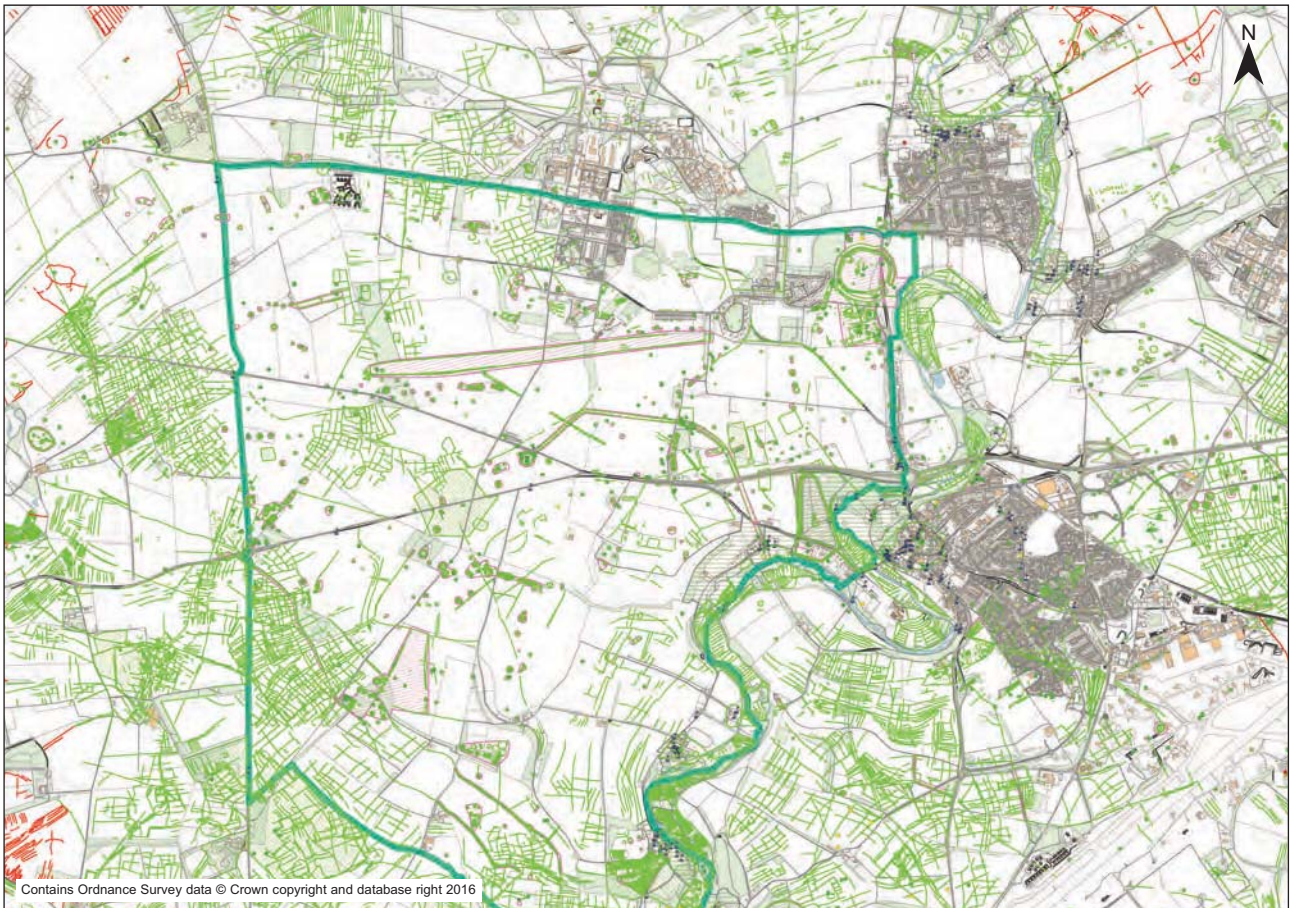
*Archaeological archive storage facilities*  
(© Wessex Archaeology)

and different forms of scientific analysis. It is recognised that the most appropriate methods of investigation will be determined by the specific questions being asked, and that some of the research themes outlined in the Agenda may require the further refinement of the strategic objectives listed below, or the development of new ones.

### Strategic objectives

The Resource Assessment has described the wealth of data, in many different forms (including finds assemblages and excavation archives), which have been collected over decades, indeed centuries of investigation. Much of this data would benefit from re-analysis in the light of more recent research and new theoretical perspectives, using appropriate techniques of investigation and dating, and applying new standards of research. It is recognised that intrusive and non-intrusive methods provide very different types and levels of knowledge, and that certain questions may only be answered by employing invasive techniques, whether fieldwork methods, such as excavation, or various forms of artefact analysis.

- 2.1 A concerted effort should be made to compile a full inventory of all unpublished archives from past fieldwork events within the WHS, and to establish their location and contents. This process would be facilitated by the establishment of a single digital repository and the provision of adequate facilities for the storage of archives and finds.
- 2.2. Research making use of existing data should be encouraged, and their potential to help answer new research questions should always be considered during the formulation of research programmes before interventions to acquire new material are planned.
- 2.3. Opportunities should be taken to re-examine the results of past investigations, such as geophysical surveys, documentary research, aerial photographs, landscape surveys etc.
- 2.4. Consideration should be given to the re-examination and re-opening of antiquarian and other previous excavation trenches, which still may yield valuable new information with limited additional impact.
- 2.5. The re-opening of earlier trenches can help to mitigate their past negative impacts, by allowing fuller recording and the recovery of material previously not considered significant; by accurately recording the extent of the earlier intervention; and, potentially, by enhancing the visual character of the monuments.
- 2.6. Where research projects requiring intrusive techniques are of a general nature, ie, not



*HER records for the Stonehenge part of the World Heritage Site (© Wiltshire Council)*

specific to the WHS, and could equally be undertaken outside the WHS, the WHS resource should be preserved.

- 2.7. Any new excavation needs to be clearly targeted, and should be the minimum necessary to answer the research questions.
- 2.8. Different areas of the WHS vary considerably in their vulnerability to archaeological impacts owing, for instance, to the scale or quality of previous works, or other human and natural impacts. Monuments that are at risk of degradation or are actively being damaged may, where suitable, provide an appropriate resource for a particular area of research. A list should be maintained of sites most at risk, as a GIS layer in the WSHER. Enquiries to relevant bodies for research opportunities should be directed to this list wherever appropriate.

### *3. Information Management*

The effective management of information – its acquisition, organisation, curation, presentation and dissemination – should be at the core of all research undertaken in the WHS.

A huge body of data – archaeological, geological, environmental, and historical – has been accumulated by past and current research, and it is being continually added to. Much of that information is held and is accessible to everyone in the WSHER, maintained the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS), which contains records of sites and monuments (designated and non-designated) and is maintained using a digital mapping system (GIS) underpinned by a comprehensive curated dataset.

The coherent and integrated management of information relating to the WHS requires the designation of a single, definitive digital repository (Strategic Objective 3.3), ideally web-based and accessible, which will also provide links to research data at other locations on the web. Such a repository will:

- identify areas of potential research, by registering the locations of finds and other archival materials that may be suitable for analysis;
- keep a record of areas of the landscape that have been subject to both intrusive and non-intrusive techniques, allowing the identification of those areas where fieldwork can be most fruitfully employed in the future;

- maximise the potential of any research project, including developer-led excavation, by facilitating a thorough review of existing site and monument data, grey literature and physical and digital archives;
- aid the modelling of environmental change by enabling the mapping and synthesis of the wide range of topographical, geological and palaeo-environmental evidence;
- provide an accessible forum for the dissemination of the results of research to the wide range of interested parties, including the public;
- improve the accurate assessment of the archaeological resource and its management by being easily interrogated and continually updated with new information;
- provide a basis for data-driven updates of this Research Framework (rather than the current periodic snapshot, paper-based approach), including the formulation of future research agendas, and facilitate the research-led underpinning for revisions to the WHS Management Plan.

#### **Strategic objectives**

In order to achieve the effective management of information, five strategic objectives have been identified.

- 3.1. The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record (WSHER) should be the central system for managing information and data within the WHS.
- 3.2. The WHS GIS dataset should be held in the WSHER.
- 3.3. A plan should be formulated to identify the scope of existing digital data; what a suitable repository for it might be; who should be responsible for its maintenance; and how it should be funded.
- 3.4. The WHS GIS layer should be enhanced by including backlog projects, by pulling in all relevant spatial data, and by creating links to digital and physical archives (eg, archaeological, documentary, museum collections) and grey literature etc.
- 3.5. The prompt submission to the WSHER of summary or interim reports of all interventions and research should be a condition for any statutory permissions that are required to undertake work within the WHS, and best practice should include completion of an

OASIS form. The same standards should apply to all research projects even when statutory conditions and consents are not required.

#### *4. Developing the Research Framework*

**This Research Framework will remain current for a period of no more than 10 years, in parallel with the WHS Management Plan, after which it will be revised and updated.**

While the establishment and maintenance of a central repository within the WSHER, which is continually updated for information about the WHS, will facilitate the planning, conduct and dissemination of research, it is intended that the Research Framework will be revised and updated after a period of between five and ten years. This will involve:

- the re-assessment of the known resource of the WHS, which in the next revision will comprise the first combined resource assessment for the whole of the WHS;
- an evaluation of the progress of the Research Agenda contained within this Research Framework, and its amendment in the light of the contemporary state of knowledge, and new avenues of research; and
- an evaluation of the current Research Strategy, and its amendment as necessary.

#### **Strategic objectives**

The form which these revisions will take remains to be decided upon, but the provision of more complete digital datasets called for in this document may provide the most effective method.

- 4.1. The development of a system is required to keep the Research Framework current, and to highlight research addressing the Research Agenda. This is currently intended to be in the form of an annual review of work undertaken within the WHS, to be carried out by a sub-committee of ASAHRG.
- 4.2. The development of effective means for the future presentation and synthesis of the resource is also required, alongside regular updates through ASAHRG in the form of reviews, workshops, meetings and annual updates. The next version of the Research Framework is currently intended to be a web-based resource, probably in the form of a wiki with limited-write access.



# Appendix 1:

## Standards, Guidance and Contacts

Historic England, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*  
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/morphe-project-managers-guide/>

Historic England, *MoRPHE Project Planning Note 3, Archaeological Excavation*  
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/morphe-project-planning-note-3/>

Historic England, Guidelines and standards publications (various)  
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/>

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, CIfA regulations, standards and guidelines  
<http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

Portable Antiquities Scheme, *Code of practice for responsible metal detecting*  
<https://finds.org.uk/getinvolved/guides/codeofpractice>

Society of Museum Archaeologists  
<http://socmusarch.org.uk/socmusarch/gailmark/wordpress/>

Wiltshire County Archaeology Service  
<http://www.wshc.eu/our-services/archaeology.html>

Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group  
Contact the secretariat – Sarah.Simmonds@wiltshire.gov.uk

Historic England  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/>

The National Trust  
Dr Nicola Snashall Nicola.Snashall@nationaltrust.org.uk 01672 538028

Alexander Keiller Museum  
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/avebury-alexander-keiller-museum/>

The Salisbury Museum  
<http://www.salisburymuseum.org.uk/>

Wiltshire Museum  
<http://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/>

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The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site consists of two blocks of Wessex chalkland some 40 km apart. Individually they contain distinctive complexes of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments; together they are one of the most iconic and important prehistoric landscapes in the world.

This volume builds on the accompanying *Resource Assessment* to provide for the first time a fully integrated Research Agenda and Strategy for the whole of the World Heritage Site.

Resulting from discussion across the research community – through meetings, workshops and on-line consultation – the Framework offers a guide that encompasses the widest possible set of views and priorities. It is in every sense a collaborative document, produced by and for the constituency of researchers working in the World Heritage Site.

It does not aim to be prescriptive, or to prioritise particular topics, but rather to offer guidance designed to encourage innovative research of the highest calibre.



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