Great Britain - Stonehenge

In about 2500 BC the stones were set up in the centre of the monument. Two types of stone are used at Stonehenge – the larger sarsens and the smaller ‘bluestones’. The sarsens were erected in two concentric arrangements – an inner horseshoe and an outer circle – and the bluestones were set up between them in a double arc.

Probably at the same time that the stones were being set up in the centre of the monument, the sarsens close to the entrance were raised, together with the four Station Stones on the periphery.

About 200 or 300 years later the central bluestones were rearranged to form a circle and inner oval (which was again later altered to form a horseshoe). The earthwork Avenue was also built at this time, connecting Stonehenge with the river Avon.

One of the last prehistoric activities at Stonehenge was the digging around the stone settings of two rings of concentric pits, the so-called Y and Z holes, radiocarbon dated by antlers within them to between 1800 and 1500 BC. They may have been intended for a rearrangement of the stones that was never completed.

The stone settings at Stonehenge were built at a time of great change in prehistory, just as new styles of ‘Beaker’ pottery and the knowledge of metalworking, together with a transition to the burial of individuals with grave goods, were arriving from the Continent. From about 2400 BC, well-furnished Beaker graves such as that of the Amesbury Archer are found nearby.

In the early Bronze Age, one of the greatest concentrations of round barrows in Britain was built in the area around Stonehenge. Many barrow groups appear to have been deliberately located on hilltops visible from Stonehenge itself, such as those on King Barrow Ridge and the particularly rich burials at the Normanton Down cemetery.

Four of the sarsens at Stonehenge were adorned with hundreds of carvings depicting axe-heads and a few daggers. They appear to be bronze axes of the Arreton Down type, dating from about 1750–1500 BC. Perhaps these axes were a symbol of power or status within early Bronze Age society, or were related in some way to nearby round barrow burials.

http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/stonehenge/history/# (01.03.2018)