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00:00:00,489 --> 00:00:07,493

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

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00:00:07,493 --> 00:00:17,499

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations but not necessarily the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

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00:00:20,501 --> 00:00:25,504

Thousands of years ago, a great work was begun on a barren landscape.

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00:00:25,504 --> 00:00:31,507

The people behind the project erected a ring of colossal stones according to precise calculations.

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00:00:31,507 --> 00:00:37,511

When the job was finished, a complex machine stood in the middle of no place.

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00:00:38,511 --> 00:00:40,513

Then, they disappeared.

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00:00:41,513 --> 00:00:43,514

But their monument is almost intact.

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00:00:44,515 --> 00:00:46,516

It is called Stonehenge.

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00:00:48,517 --> 00:00:54,521

The glow of ancient knowledge has faded, but a strange power still seems to linger over the stones.

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00:00:55,521 --> 00:01:01,525

It beckons some men to worship, others to search for the magic of Stonehenge.

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00:01:07,528 --> 00:01:15,533

It is among the classic mysteries of the world, an immense circle of stones that stands on the Salisbury Plain in southern England.

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00:01:15,533 --> 00:01:20,536

For centuries, men have called it Stonehenge and wondered at its purpose.

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00:01:21,537 --> 00:01:26,540

The mystery of Stonehenge is twofold. Who built it and why?

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00:01:26,540 --> 00:01:31,543

Archaeologists normally have the answer to one of those questions and can deduce the rest.

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00:01:31,543 --> 00:01:36,545

But until now, we've known very little about Stonehenge and understood less.

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00:01:36,545 --> 00:01:42,549

Only recently has evidence come to light that points to Stonehenge being an exceedingly complex machine.

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00:01:42,549 --> 00:01:46,551

Yet with a purpose so simple, it was overlooked for centuries.

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00:01:47,552 --> 00:01:53,555

But finding the why of Stonehenge only increases the mystery of who built it.

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00:01:54,556 --> 00:01:59,559

Stonehenge is a puzzle that seems to defy the usual methods of archaeology.

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00:01:59,559 --> 00:02:02,561

There are no written clues to explain it.

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00:02:02,561 --> 00:02:10,565

Theories that it was a city of the dead or a pagan temple of sacrifice have been based as much on pure speculation as on evidence.

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00:02:11,566 --> 00:02:18,570

The first breakthrough in understanding came in the mid-1960s when a young astronomer entered the search.

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00:02:18,570 --> 00:02:25,574

It was a solution based on pure numbers and pure directions.

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00:02:25,574 --> 00:02:31,578

His name is Gerald Hawkins, author of *Beyond Stonehenge*.

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00:02:31,578 --> 00:02:38,582

And strangely, it did require a new look.

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00:02:38,582 --> 00:02:41,584

It required perhaps an astronomer to look at it as I did.

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00:02:41,584 --> 00:02:48,588

And just looking through the archways, I felt that it must be more than a temple.

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00:02:48,588 --> 00:02:54,591

The idea of doors in an open plain didn't make sense to me.

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00:02:54,591 --> 00:02:58,594

And I felt I should see something through these archways.

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00:02:59,594 --> 00:03:05,598

So began the quest for a solution to the riddle of Stonehenge.

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00:03:05,598 --> 00:03:09,600

Hawkins began by investigating the few known facts.

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00:03:09,600 --> 00:03:18,605

The earliest holes in the ground seem to date now to 2500, 2700 BC.

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00:03:18,605 --> 00:03:23,608

Roughly the time of the Egyptian pyramids may be a few centuries ahead.

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00:03:24,609 --> 00:03:29,612

Then the Stonehenge proper was built approximately 2000 BC.

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00:03:29,612 --> 00:03:34,615

They were working there for centuries, perhaps even a thousand years.

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00:03:35,615 --> 00:03:41,619

The world at 2500 BC was dotted by no more than a handful of civilizations.

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00:03:41,619 --> 00:03:45,621

Much of the world's population lived in caves.

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00:03:45,621 --> 00:03:51,625

Man was learning how to forge crude tools out of bronze.

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00:03:51,625 --> 00:03:56,628

In Egypt, the slaves were still toiling over the great pyramids.

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00:04:00,630 --> 00:04:04,633

The walls of Jericho were yet unbreached.

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00:04:06,634 --> 00:04:11,637

In Mesopotamia, the Sumerians were just beginning to use a new tool called writing

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00:04:11,637 --> 00:04:15,639

to record their history and legends.

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00:04:16,640 --> 00:04:22,643

It would be centuries before the Jews would hide the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves of Qumran.

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00:04:25,645 --> 00:04:31,648

From the tiny island of Crete, the Minoan Empire ruled the Mediterranean world.

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00:04:31,648 --> 00:04:37,652

Their ancient sea kings had not yet sailed their ships beyond the Straits of Gibraltar.

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00:04:38,653 --> 00:04:43,655

No explorer had touched the shore of North America,

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00:04:43,655 --> 00:04:48,658

crossed its wide expanses, or glimpsed any of its wonders.

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00:04:52,661 --> 00:04:59,665

Yet in that remote time, an army of men was mobilized on the Salisbury Plain to build Stonehenge.

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00:04:59,665 --> 00:05:01,666

Why?

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00:05:08,670 --> 00:05:12,673

At one time, the suggestion was the stones came down by glaciers,

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00:05:12,673 --> 00:05:16,675

but it seems that the stone was indeed quarried.

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00:05:16,675 --> 00:05:19,677

We have pretty well proved that it was quarried,

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00:05:19,677 --> 00:05:27,681

because recently a museum replicas went there and found a stone with an actual drill hole.

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00:05:27,681 --> 00:05:29,683

We have a sample of it here.

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00:05:29,683 --> 00:05:33,685

It was cut into and shows the two halves.

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00:05:34,685 --> 00:05:38,688

This stone is so tough it takes half an hour to cut with a diamond saw,

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00:05:38,688 --> 00:05:43,691

yet they drilled in with no equipment except perhaps some flint chips and a piece of wood.

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00:05:45,692 --> 00:05:51,695

Why did the ancient engineers select blue stones that can be found in only one place in the world,

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00:05:51,695 --> 00:05:53,697

the Presley Mountains?

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00:05:55,698 --> 00:05:59,700

Rocks so hard they dull modern cutting tools.

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00:06:04,703 --> 00:06:14,709

This is one of the inner circle of blue stones which theologians have found were brought all the way from the Presley Mountains in Wales,

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00:06:14,709 --> 00:06:19,712

and it does seem that there is really only one place in the world where they could have come from,

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00:06:19,712 --> 00:06:21,713

but there is also a theory that...

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00:06:21,713 --> 00:06:26,716

Another investigator, Francis Hitching, has been probing the legends of Stonehenge,

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00:06:26,716 --> 00:06:29,718

roping for a key to unlock its mystery.

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00:06:29,718 --> 00:06:32,720

There are still a lot of unanswered questions.

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00:06:32,720 --> 00:06:37,723

The main one being, why on earth did they bother to put up these as opposed to those?

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00:06:37,723 --> 00:06:41,725

What special kind of power did these stones contain?

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00:06:43,726 --> 00:06:49,730

Hitching believes that for the ancient Britons the countryside was alive with supernatural spirits,

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00:06:49,730 --> 00:06:52,731

and that even the rocks were endowed with magical powers.

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00:06:52,731 --> 00:06:57,734

Local folklore is rich with tales like that of the Devil's heel.

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00:06:57,734 --> 00:07:03,738

It is said that the Devil stalked the woods one night and left his mark in stone.

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00:07:03,738 --> 00:07:12,743

According to another legend, nine maidens were frozen into stone when the morning light caught them frolicking on the moors.

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00:07:13,744 --> 00:07:17,746

Other rocks were thought to dance on Midsummer's Mourn.

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00:07:19,747 --> 00:07:25,751

It was a matter of firm belief that evil spirits presided over certain boulders,

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00:07:25,751 --> 00:07:29,753

like the hunchback gnome that lurked under a roof of stone,

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00:07:32,755 --> 00:07:38,758

or the witch who cast a spell over tingle stone making it unsafe to touch after dark.

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00:07:40,760 --> 00:07:43,761

Positive powers were attributed to other monoliths,

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00:07:43,761 --> 00:07:49,765

like the one called Stanton Drew, which could supposedly cure a sick child of the pox,

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00:07:50,765 --> 00:07:57,770

or the fairy stone, which was believed to emit a strange energy, like an electrical charge.

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00:07:59,771 --> 00:08:07,776

What all these legends add up to, seems to me, is that a certain kind of power existed in them

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00:08:07,776 --> 00:08:09,777

and was known to the people at that time.

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00:08:09,777 --> 00:08:16,781

And as recently as a couple of years ago, there were reports of witchcraft ceremonies taking place

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00:08:17,781 --> 00:08:21,784

in a series of stones called the Rollwright Stones in the Midlands.

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00:08:22,784 --> 00:08:25,786

From the Presley Mountains, where the stonehenge rocks were quarried,

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00:08:25,786 --> 00:08:30,789

they were hauled some 240 miles across the landscape of England.

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00:08:33,791 --> 00:08:35,792

No powered vehicles existed.

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00:08:35,792 --> 00:08:40,795

Forests and narrow streams clotted the path between the quarry and the final site.

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00:08:41,796 --> 00:08:43,797

How were the stones moved?

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00:08:46,798 --> 00:08:51,801

In 1954, the British Broadcasting Company recruited 40 schoolboys

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00:08:51,801 --> 00:08:54,803

to retrace the steps their ancestors might have taken.

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00:08:55,804 --> 00:09:00,807

The purpose of the experiment was to determine the likely methods used to transport the stones.

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00:09:01,807 --> 00:09:06,810

A concrete slab, only one-fiftieth, the weight of a blue stone was used.

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00:09:08,811 --> 00:09:15,816

Nothing like this astonishing feat of transportation was ever attempted by any other people in prehistoric Europe.

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00:09:17,817 --> 00:09:25,821

Their task was so arduous that later generations believed the builders must have been aided by the magician Merlin.

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00:09:26,822 --> 00:09:31,825

According to legend, Merlin made the stones so light that they could float on water,

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00:09:32,826 --> 00:09:35,827

but there were still casualties along the way.

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00:09:38,829 --> 00:09:42,831

If magic is excluded as a source of power for the stonehengers,

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00:09:42,831 --> 00:09:48,835

then most of the population of southern Britain must have been involved in hauling the stones to Salisbury.

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00:09:49,836 --> 00:09:51,837

We're speaking very glibly about it.

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00:09:51,837 --> 00:10:00,842

I estimate one and a half million man days of work and many broken legs and so on.

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00:10:01,843 --> 00:10:09,847

A drive, an effort, an achievement that they got a great satisfaction out of as to what was in their minds.

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00:10:09,847 --> 00:10:21,854

At least I have uncovered certain very hard facts, numerical relationships, an interest in precision, an interest in time patterns.

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00:10:22,855 --> 00:10:28,858

And this means something very fundamental to their psychological basis and to their beliefs.

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00:10:29,859 --> 00:10:32,861

What they were doing was a complete entity to them.

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00:10:33,861 --> 00:10:34,862

They must have been extremely satisfying.

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00:10:35,863 --> 00:10:38,864

They did not do it by being driven as slaves.

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00:10:38,864 --> 00:10:41,866

They did not do it for money because there wasn't a monetary system.

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00:10:41,866 --> 00:10:43,867

They did it because they wanted to.

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00:10:43,867 --> 00:10:52,873

And here we have perhaps the beginning of our civilization, the essence of civilization, a community with a common purpose and a common set of ideas.

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00:10:53,873 --> 00:11:04,880

Surely the masterminds of Stonehenge could not have inspired an army of workers unless the people were held in the spell of a great, perhaps even magical idea.

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00:11:08,882 --> 00:11:14,886

A religious sect called Druids claims spiritual descent from the architects of Stonehenge.

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00:11:15,886 --> 00:11:17,887

There is little evidence to support their claim.

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00:11:17,887 --> 00:11:25,892

Their ritual reenactments on the site are of little help in solving the puzzle, for the Druids were apparently latecomers.

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00:11:26,893 --> 00:11:31,896

The people who put up Stonehenge came from a time before people could read and write.

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00:11:31,896 --> 00:11:35,898

And really this is one of the big mysteries about Stonehenge.

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00:11:35,898 --> 00:11:46,904

How they came later on to have a mathematical, geometrical, astronomical knowledge which seems quite beyond the conceptions of primitive and barbarian people.

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00:11:47,905 --> 00:11:59,912

Perhaps more remarkable than that is the fact that scattered all over Britain are some 300 other circles, some of them still intact, which can do the same job.

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00:11:59,912 --> 00:12:07,917

And the man who has discovered this, spent half a lifetime doing it, is Professor Alexander Tom.

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00:12:09,918 --> 00:12:17,923

An engineer by training, Tom was convinced that there was a calculated design behind what appeared to be a random arrangement of stones.

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00:12:18,923 --> 00:12:28,929

Using advanced mathematics, Tom was able to prove that the stones were aligned both to one another and to the movement of the planets in the night sky.

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00:12:29,930 --> 00:12:33,932

The implications of his discovery are staggering.

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00:12:35,933 --> 00:12:44,938

It now seems possible that the whole of prehistoric Britain was landscaped according to a deliberate and far-reaching plan.

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00:12:45,939 --> 00:12:55,945

There are a number of theories as to whether there is any reality to legends about the magic power of megaliths.

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00:12:56,946 --> 00:13:07,952

And perhaps the one which has been most widely written about is that the whole of Britain is crisscrossed with a network of invisible straight lines called lay lines.

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00:13:08,953 --> 00:13:16,957

These are supposed to link all ancient sacred sites like some unimaginably complicated spiders web.

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00:13:17,958 --> 00:13:30,966

And the stones, all the sites, burial mounds, tombs, they're supposed to have been put on certain key places which were chosen because they had some kind of power.

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00:13:31,966 --> 00:13:38,970

Fortresses were built atop sacred mounds as if to absorb the power of old ruins.

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00:13:39,971 --> 00:13:46,975

And monks erected churches on sites where pagan priests once gathered to recite magical incantations.

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00:13:48,976 --> 00:13:54,980

In folklore, some key sites retained their magic long after the builders disappeared.

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00:13:55,980 --> 00:14:04,986

It is known that around some of these sites, underneath tombs, around the standing stones, there are anomalies in the Earth's magnetic field.

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00:14:05,986 --> 00:14:13,991

And here I think may lie the secret to the power in these megaliths.

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00:14:14,991 --> 00:14:26,998

If Francis Hatching's theory is correct, what prehistoric man called magic may have been akin to 20th century electromagnetic energy.

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00:14:27,999 --> 00:14:38,005

Is it just possible that people in those times somehow knew how to tap the electromagnetic anomalies that are in these stones and use them in their healing?

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00:14:39,006 --> 00:14:44,008

Is it perhaps also possible that they used it as birds do and as dogs seem to?

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00:14:45,009 --> 00:14:51,013

Intellipathy. They could find their way by these stones. They could perhaps communicate from one stone to another.

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00:14:52,013 --> 00:14:57,016

They were like a giant psychic grid which could be used for telepathic purposes.

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00:14:58,017 --> 00:15:04,020

Like the animals of the forest, the inhabitants of prehistoric Britain may have been attuned to the Earth's signals.

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00:15:04,020 --> 00:15:10,024

Some have theorized that electromagnetic energy may be the basis of extrasensory perception.

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00:15:11,024 --> 00:15:18,028

If this is true, perhaps the Stonehengers used that psychic energy on a level never achieved since.

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00:15:19,029 --> 00:15:25,033

At the very center of this hypothetical communications network stood Stonehenge.

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00:15:25,033 --> 00:15:33,037

As a quantitative scientist, I saw a fundamental pattern that intrigued me and reached my brain and mind.

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00:15:34,038 --> 00:15:46,045

And so with calculations, I was able to go back in time to 2000 BC and as though it were stand there and watch the sunrise and moonrise and planets and stars.

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00:15:46,045 --> 00:15:56,051

And with the computer, very quickly, we could see that the pattern of stones matched the pattern of the sky.

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00:15:57,051 --> 00:16:07,057

Therefore, a ritualistic temple became a much more fundamental device. It had at least some purpose and that purpose reached out to the stars.

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00:16:08,058 --> 00:16:15,062

With the aid of a computer, Dr. Gerald Hawkins was able to do what no man before him had done.

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00:16:16,063 --> 00:16:20,065

Proved that Stonehenge was in part a calendar and an observatory.

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00:16:21,066 --> 00:16:28,070

Each giant block points to a specific position of a planet or star as it moves in its journey across the heavens.

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00:16:29,070 --> 00:16:35,074

In such a way, sky and Earth were inextricably bound through a stone age machine.

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00:16:36,074 --> 00:16:42,078

The most celebrated alignment is the Heelstone that points to the rising sun on Midsummer's Mourn.

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00:16:43,078 --> 00:16:49,082

The popular assumption is that the Druids used this site for rituals of incantation and human sacrifice.

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00:16:50,083 --> 00:16:53,084

But were they the designers of Stonehenge?

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00:16:55,086 --> 00:17:02,090

Archaeologists and antiquarians have argued for centuries about who put up this great erection of stones here.

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00:17:02,090 --> 00:17:12,096

The best bet seemed to be the Druids because the Druids were known to have existed here in Britain before Caesar arrived.

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00:17:13,096 --> 00:17:14,097

In fact, Caesar described the Druids.

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00:17:15,097 --> 00:17:28,105

So, 18th century antiquarians such as William Stucley used to draw fanciful pictures of the Druids as they thought taking part in ceremonies around Stonehenge and similar kinds of circles.

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00:17:28,105 --> 00:17:33,108

Now, we're almost certain today that this conception is absolutely wrong.

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00:17:34,108 --> 00:17:44,114

And the kind of people who you see taking part in Druid ceremonies here on Midsummer morning are nothing more than a 19th century invention.

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00:17:45,115 --> 00:17:57,122

Druids, in fact, what we do know about them, they had a strong priestly class who used to gather on the whole in oak groves where their secret ceremonies took place.

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00:17:58,123 --> 00:18:04,126

They were a bloodthirsty race. Caesar describes them as hanging people up in baskets and burning them.

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00:18:05,127 --> 00:18:09,129

Otherwise, we know that they were indeed expert astronomers.

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00:18:10,130 --> 00:18:19,135

If, as hitching and other investigators have concluded, the architects of Stonehenge were not the Druids, then who did design and build it?

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00:18:19,135 --> 00:18:30,141

Far from being mere hunters or cave dwellers, the prehistoric Stonehengers seemed suddenly to have become possessed of a superior, highly sophisticated intelligence.

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00:18:31,142 --> 00:18:39,147

Otherwise, they could never have devoted their total energies to a grid that covered all England and focused on the axis of Stonehenge.

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00:18:40,147 --> 00:18:47,151

One must wonder from where did they get this incredible spurt of knowledge, a spurt that was 5,000 years ahead of its time.

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00:18:47,151 --> 00:19:00,159

The answer may never be known, but the Stones still have a power for many who worship in the manner of the Druids, and Stonehenge still intrigues men who seek to understand the workings of an ancient machine.

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00:19:01,160 --> 00:19:06,163

I wonder if they were not worshiping a new type of God to us, a God of time.

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00:19:06,163 --> 00:19:25,174

The idea just comes to me now that perhaps the repetitive security of time following time was of value to them, and perhaps even Stonehenge itself was built to perhaps defeat the ravages of time in that time had a concept to them.

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00:19:25,174 --> 00:19:35,180

If ever we can find out an idea that explains what they did, it will be really dramatic. I don't feel that we've come close to any idea yet, but you can imagine a God of time.

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00:19:36,180 --> 00:19:39,182

We don't have it. We hate time, but maybe they look forward to it.

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00:19:39,182 --> 00:20:00,194

What were the Stonehenges looking forward to? Was it merely the observations of the cycles of time, or the predictions of eclipses? Or did they expect some even more magical communication from the outer cosmos, where time has no limits?

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00:20:10,200 --> 00:20:25,209

Stonehenge is not alone as a riddle of ancient design. In the thick jungles of the Yucatan Peninsula, an ancient observatory called the Caracol charted the phases of Venus as accurately as 20th century telescopes.

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00:20:26,210 --> 00:20:40,218

Buried deep within the same jungle, a Mayan pyramid was aligned to the Midsummer's Sun. 6,000 miles away, Egyptian pyramids mapped the rising and the setting sun on the same day.

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00:20:41,218 --> 00:20:51,224

And in the distant past of India, holy men gathered to watch the sky. For what were they waiting?

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00:20:52,225 --> 00:21:01,230

We have some understanding now of the possible explanation for Stonehenge and the other monuments around the world that have puzzled investigators for so long.

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00:21:01,230 --> 00:21:10,236

The question which still eludes us is who erected these working monuments? Clearly, they were the work of people more advanced than we had thought possible for that time.

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00:21:11,236 --> 00:21:20,241

We can speculate that our ancestors were possessed of knowledge that was somehow lost to succeeding generations. Or perhaps they had help.

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00:21:20,241 --> 00:21:28,246

Coming up next, in search of continues with an exploration of an African tribe's amazing understanding of astronomy.

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00:21:29,247 --> 00:21:38,252

Then 20th century with Mike Wallace reports on gang violence in America. And later tonight, Jesse James Body, the Iwo Jima flag and other extraordinary things with stories to tell on histories lost and found.

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00:21:38,252 --> 00:21:49,258

At 8, here on the History Channel, where the past comes alive.

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00:21:58,264 --> 00:22:03,267

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