

# Visitor centre to be prime example of green development

The new visitor centre building at Countess East will incorporate a host of features aimed at making it as 'green' as possible. The centre, designed by top international architects Denton Corker Marshall, will minimise both energy consumption and the impact on the environment.

The proposed location of the inspirational new building, at the top of the 80-acre Countess East site, just outside the World Heritage Site, will allow it to fit into the natural slope of the land and blend easily into the surrounding countryside. The sheltered position will help to reduce heat loss in winter and heat gain in the summer. Along with the grass roof, these features will create an environmentally friendly insulation system.

Described as a 'landscape' rather than a 'landmark' building, the centre will first appear to the approaching visitor as a long sweeping wall, broken only by a single gap in its surface for the entrance. Direct architectural references to Stonehenge have been avoided. The walls are metal clad rather than stone, and recycled materials, such as steel, will be used.

Inside the building, energy-efficient equipment will save on natural resources and cut down on the energy bills. High-efficiency lighting will turn itself

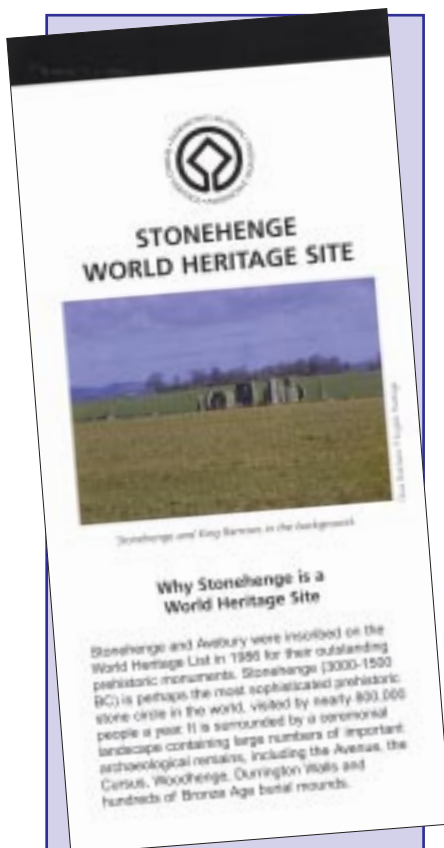
off when areas are unoccupied and toilets will have a dual flush.

Visitors will travel into the World Heritage Site on a low-emission, low-impact land train (fuelled by Liquified Petroleum Gas) with enclosed cars running on rubber tyres. Equipped for disabled visitors, it will run on a simple track laid on top of the existing surface to avoid damage to any archaeology.

The road approach to the visitor centre, from a slip road off the eastbound carriageway of the A303 into car and coach parking areas, will minimise visual 'pollution'. There will be separate zones to cut down on noise and introduce a sense of quiet and calm before people move into a visitor centre befitting the status of Stonehenge as an iconic World Heritage Site.

A Green Travel Plan will promote the role of the site as an integrated transport hub connecting to local public transport and the walking and cycling networks.

Outside the centre, English Heritage has been working closely with English Nature to minimise impact on the fragile environment of the Avon water meadows to the east, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a candidate Special Area of Conservation. They are looking into an innovative scheme to use reed beds to purify surface water.



## New leaflet explains World Heritage Site

There is now an easy way to find out more about the unique World Heritage Site landscape that surrounds Stonehenge. A new leaflet has been launched explaining more about what makes this part of Wiltshire so important and how it is being preserved for future generations.

The leaflet looks at the international significance of the site, which covers 6500 acres of chalk downland and arable fields, and explains the role of the World Heritage Site Management Plan. This is a key document which sets out the long-term vision for the protection of the landscape and its prehistoric monuments and it includes objectives for access, farming, nature conservation and research.

The Management Plan has been endorsed by UNESCO and the Government.

To get your copy of the World Heritage Site leaflet, contact the World Heritage site team at the English Heritage offices in Amesbury on 01980 625758, or write to English Heritage, 1st Floor, Abbey Buildings, Abbey Square, Amesbury, Wiltshire, SP4 7ES.

For more details about the World Heritage Site go to [www.english-heritage.org.uk/stonehenge](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/stonehenge). Audio interviews with the World Heritage Site Co-ordinator and others involved in the future of Stonehenge can be found at [www.thestonehengeproject.org](http://www.thestonehengeproject.org)

## Trust launches Britain's biggest arable reversion project



The marsh fritillary is one of several rare butterflies which should find Stonehenge more hospitable in the future

The Stonehenge Historic Landscape is the setting for a project which will restore flower-rich grassland to the heart of the World Heritage Site - and become Britain's largest arable reversion project.

The National Trust is leading the project as part of the implementation of its Land Use Plan. With support from Defra and in partnership with Stonehenge tenant farmers Robert and Fiona Turner, the Trust is initiating Phase One of a 10-year project to revert up to 200 hectares (60%) of the central part of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site to chalk grassland rich in native wild flowers.

The Trust, in partnership with English Heritage and Defra, believes that the Stonehenge and Avebury Special Countryside Stewardship Scheme will restore the integrity of the historic landscape, and benefit archaeology, nature conservation, visitors and farmers.

Scott Green, the Trust's property manager, explains: "Chalk grassland attracts a unique range of flora and fauna, but is a threatened

habitat. The reversion project will create an area of extensive grassland grazed at low density by sheep and cattle, with seasonal hay production to soften the contours of the land."

The site will become a safe, natural habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, particularly increasingly rare chalk downland wild flowers such as early gentians, wild thyme, self-heal, bird's foot trefoil and devil's bit scabious. Insects such as the marsh fritillary butterfly and birds like the skylark will also benefit.

The National Trust's 850-hectare Stonehenge Estate surrounds the stone circle and its immediate vicinity (80 acres), the area managed by English Heritage on behalf of the nation.

The initiative at Stonehenge is part of the National Trust's goal of long-term sustainable farming through the Farming Forward programme, which incorporates projects for sustainable land management, local foods, skills and training and food and farming learning.

# STONEHENGE Vision

Stonehenge Vision is published by English Heritage, the National Trust and the Highways Agency. For more information please visit our websites at:  
[www.thestonehengeproject.org](http://www.thestonehengeproject.org)  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)  
[www.highways.gov.uk](http://www.highways.gov.uk)

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[www.foursquaredesign.com](http://www.foursquaredesign.com)

## Caption Competition

### Win a book token

Congratulations to the Caption Competition winners from the summer issue of Vision, no. 8. They are as follows:

**"The only symptom he showed was tunnel vision"** - Graham Wallen of Laverstock (£25 voucher)

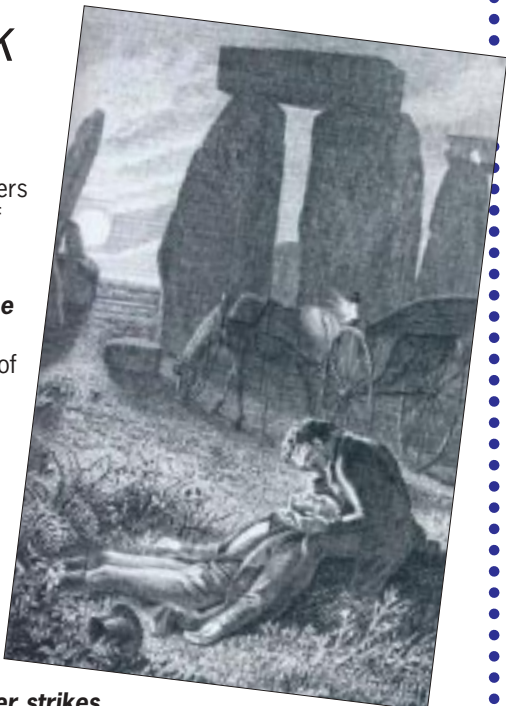
The runners up, who each win a £10 voucher, were:

**"Don't despair father, the builders promised they'll be back on Tuesday to put the roof on"**  
- (T Sandle, Amesbury)

**"The Amesbury Archer strikes again"** - (D Brick, Laverstock)

**"Another victim of the Ground Force-inspired craze to build ever bigger and better rockeries"** - (R Doel, Salisbury)

Many thanks for your entries.



# STONEHENGE Vision

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE STONEHENGE PROJECT • ISSUE 9 • WINTER 2003

## The Stonehenge Project

The Stonehenge Project has been developed by English Heritage, The National Trust and The Highways Agency to improve the setting of Britain's greatest ancient monument by reuniting it with the downland landscape to which it belongs. A world-class visitor centre will be created outside the World Heritage Site, the roads will be removed or concealed and the landscape around Stonehenge will be restored to grassland, allowing wildlife and traditional animal husbandry to prosper and opening up the area to walkers.

This newsletter is published to keep all those interested in Stonehenge and its landscape informed of the Project's progress.

## DEMOCRACY ON YOUR DOORSTEP

# The Stonehenge Project – the planning process explained

Two separate planning processes are involved in securing permissions for The Stonehenge Project. One is gaining planning consent to build the new visitor centre and improve access to the Stones.

The other is a different procedure for the new road system in the vicinity of the monument, which we explained in the last issue and is now at the Public Inquiry stage.

## Visitor Centre Planning Application

English Heritage, working with the National Trust, will make a detailed planning application for the visitor centre and access proposals to the local planning authority, Salisbury District Council. The application will fully document the scheme for the proposed visitor centre at Countess East. It will provide technical details about the building and car park and the proposed land train transit route which will take visitors under Countess Road and into the World Heritage Site.

The application will seek to show how the scheme complies with all relevant national and local planning policies, particularly the Salisbury District Local Plan. It will also demonstrate how it meets the requirements of the Countess East Visitor Centre Planning Brief and the World Heritage Site Management Plan, which have been approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Salisbury District Council and Wiltshire County Council.

Supporting these proposals will be a set of documents showing the detailed research, assessment work and consultation that have gone into the final scheme. They will include an Environmental Statement, a Transport Assessment and Green Travel Plan, a Design Statement and a Statement of Community Consultation.

Once the planning application has been submitted, the plans and supporting documents will be available for public inspection. There will be also a public exhibition held locally where Project staff will be on hand to discuss queries.

There will then be an opportunity for people to comment formally on the plans to Salisbury District Council. This can only be done once the planning application has been submitted.

The council will have about four

months from the date of submission to make a decision, assuming that they and the Government Office of the South West consider it appropriate for Salisbury District Council to determine the application. They could grant planning permission, grant planning permission if certain conditions are fulfilled or refuse permission.

You can find out more about the planning process by contacting the Salisbury District Council Planning Office at Bourne Hill, Salisbury, on 01722 434327.

## Road scheme Public Inquiry set for early 2004

Following the end of the consultation period for the Highways Act draft Orders for the A303 Stonehenge Improvement Scheme on 4 September, the Highways Agency has announced that a Public Inquiry will be held early in the New Year.

Over 1300 objections were received. Although many objectors expressed similar concerns, all have been sent individual replies. A number are local landowners, who have a statutory right to be heard at a Public Inquiry.

The Highways Agency is in discussion with the objectors to resolve some of the issues raised. However it is unlikely that all objections will be resolved this way and it is for this reason that the Secretary of State for Transport has decided to call a Public Inquiry.

The Inquiry will operate in the following way:

It will open at The Guildhall, Salisbury, on 17 February 2004 before an independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. After a few days the hearing will move across the road to Cross Keys House in Market Square, Salisbury.

Everyone who has submitted a letter of objection, representation or support has been sent a registration form asking if they would like to appear at the Inquiry. Those who appear will make their representation and will be asked questions. When the Inspector has heard from everyone he will ask the main parties to present their closing addresses. He will then write his report, which is likely to take some months.

The Inspector will submit the report, along with his recommendations, to the Secretary of State for Transport. The Inspector's recommendations may be for the scheme to go ahead; not to go ahead; or to go ahead, but

with modifications. The Secretary of State's final decision will be based on these recommendations.

### TIMETABLE

Here are the likely key dates:

- 17 February: Start of Public Inquiry
- Autumn 2004: Inspector's report
- Late 2004: Secretary of State's decision

## How the A303 tunnel will look

The last issue of Vision showed a computer-generated artist's impression of the eastern end of the A303 tunnel. Some people asked why there were no street lights shown. Lighting is planned for Countess Roundabout, Longbarrow Crossroads and of course, inside the tunnel, but to minimise light pollution there will be no additional lighting on the approaches to the tunnel.

We were also asked whether the embankments would look as green as suggested in the picture. As part of the project, the embankments and verges will be carefully landscaped and seeded with indigenous grass species to fit in with the surrounding countryside.

## Inside:



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ENGLISH HERITAGE



THE NATIONAL TRUST



HIGHWAYS AGENCY



# Bringing international experience to bear at Stonehenge

## Vision interviews the new Head of Stonehenge

Peter Carson has joined English Heritage as Head of Stonehenge, managing the site and visitor operations in succession to Clews Everard, who has been promoted to English Heritage Visitor Operations Director. Peter comes to the post with a wide experience of the tourism industry, not just in the UK but in Hong Kong and Singapore. Vision interviewed him at Stonehenge as visitors poured through the turnstiles.

*What do you see as your biggest challenge, working at such a famous place?*

Working with everyone involved to enrich the experience for visitors to Stonehenge so that more people will be able to feel its mysterious power.

*How do you see your previous experience in the UK and abroad as preparation for your new role?*

I worked with the Tussauds Group both in London and abroad, which has given me a broad understanding of domestic and international visitors' needs, something which is essential in my current role. My work in cities such as Hong Kong and Singapore gave me a real insight into how people from different cultures travel as tourists and what they look for in a 'day out'.

*You've now been in post for over six months. In any new job there is lots to learn, but what would you consider to be the highlights?*

I enjoy the variety of my job. Building up the trust of the local community and local authorities has been a major priority for me, so I could be discussing the history of Stonehenge with a Japanese visitor in the morning and talking about local issues with an Amesbury town councillor in the afternoon.

I also provide support for the team preparing the planning application for the new visitor centre and access arrangements. This means I need a thorough working knowledge of the Project to date, so that I understand how

the new building will operate and how it will link into the wider landscape.

*Finally – if there was one highlight of the year, one aspect that you would say has been – 'one amazing day' – what would it be?*

Without doubt the summer solstice is the biggest event of the

year for Stonehenge. This year it attracted more than 30,000 visitors and was described in the local press as the best in memory.



Peter Carson at Stonehenge

## Stonehenge on TV

Look out for the fascinating programme following the preparations for the 2003 summer solstice, to be screened on BBC 4 on December 14. It will be repeated on BBC2 early in the New Year.

## Your views please

This is the last issue of Stonehenge Vision in its present format. The Stonehenge Project will continue to keep the local community updated by means of a new newsletter and the first issue will be published in June 2004. If you have any ideas or comments about what you would like to see in the new publication, or its appearance, please address them to The Editor, Stonehenge newsletter, c/o GNN, 2 Rivergate, Bristol BS1 6EL or contact us via the website at [www.thestonehengeproject.org](http://www.thestonehengeproject.org)

As the winter solstice approaches, astrologer Roy Gillett gives his personal view of the significance of Stonehenge's four 'quarter days'

For some people, Stonehenge may appear to be just another signposted ruin. But for many it is a precise observatory which adjusts their inner focus and becomes the sacred core of their lives.

Even after many thousands of years, we sense precision in the arrangement of the towering stones. As we wander and study the landscape, we feel the intelligent presence of the builders of this intriguing monument as well as the minds of everyone who has experienced it since.

## Sun, moon at Stonehenge

I do not believe such impressions are superstitious fancy. Intricate studies provide strong evidence that Stonehenge, in association with many other Neolithic monuments in the British Isles and beyond, could have been an observatory that measured the heavens.

Our ancestors and many people today see life on earth, as a reflection of the cycles of the heavens. We keep in touch with the ebb and flow of the seasons, unusual events and potential crop yields. We may decide when to marry or start a new enterprise by measuring the position of the sun, moon and planets against the backdrop of the stars.

There has been much debate about how Stonehenge and its surroundings could have been used in ancient times to give exact measurements of eclipse cycles, lunar phases and sun and moon positions and perhaps reflect the paths of the stars. In his book *Sun, Moon & Stonehenge*, the megalithic researcher Robin Heath has shown how this could have worked.

He explains that at the latitude of Stonehenge, approximately 51 degrees north, "An observer at the marker point (in the centre), in one year sees the sunrise and sunset travel along the horizon about 40 degrees either side of the east-west equinoctial sunrise and sunset position".

The summer solstice, which this



## 93,000 acres of archaeology

In the last issue of Vision (no 8, Summer 2003) English Heritage archaeologist Dave Batchelor introduced readers to the wider archaeological landscape around Stonehenge, voted the UK's favourite ancient monument in a recent Channel 5 television series. In this issue we meet Dr Allan Morton, the Ministry of Defence Archaeologist based at Tilshead.

The MOD domain stretches from Perham Down in the East almost to Westbury and from Urchfont in the north to the World Heritage Site area just south of the Packway. This is the largest military training area in the UK, with over 93,000 acres of land – nearly a ninth of Wiltshire.

appears to have been in constant use right up to the medieval period.

"There's no water there any more, which may be the reason people moved off the Plain and sites were abandoned. There are Neolithic long barrows, linear features from the Bronze Age, round barrows, Iron Age hill forts, enclosures and field systems and Romano-British sites. The linear features go for many miles over the landscape and would have consisted of two banks of earth. Were these field boundaries or ceremonial avenues? We don't know.

"It's my job to look after all of them. There sure are more of them than there

Dr Morton is a Canadian with a doctorate from Cambridge University who specialises in geo-archaeology – how archaeological sites are affected and preserved by natural processes.

What attracts him to such a windswept expanse of the English countryside?

"At first sight the landscape may seem rather uninteresting, but to me it's bristling with archaeology" says Allan. "There's masses of evidence from 5000 years ago that people were digging all over Salisbury Plain. In fact the area

were in Texas where I worked for the US Army."

How does the MoD maintain an archaeological heritage of such diversity and age when live firing takes place almost every day of the year? Allan says it's through a combination of surveillance, education and maintenance.

"I need to know what is actually there and its exact position, so that damage can be avoided.

"I am very interested in the concept of intervisibility, which means how sites and archaeological features can be seen from one another. I can check this using a computer programme that allows me to set a point in the landscape and the 3D modelling will show me what might be visible – even if, on the ground, there could be trees and undergrowth in the way."

"Education is a big part of my work" says Allan. "We have to make sure that soldiers out on the Plain are aware of the features in the landscape and don't go digging indiscriminately. Anyone who wants to dig has to check with me.

"There are many routine maintenance jobs that need doing, such as clearing scrub – these need checking on the ground, so it gives me plenty of opportunity to get out there and see the features themselves. MoD ownership has saved this land from plough damage, so the monuments – there are about 2300 of them – have had a greater chance of survival. Large areas of the land remain as chalk downland."

"I am here at the beginning of the 21st Century, working with archaeology that stretches back a hundred generations" says Allan. "It's not just a great opportunity – it's an almighty privilege."

*Dr Allan Morton works for Defence Estates, a Ministry of Defence Agency, at Tilshead, and can be contacted on 01980 674711.*



The rare alignment of planets in May 2002, seen at Stonehenge – Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Venus and Mercury are all visible

# n and symbolism enge



year fell on 21 June, is the longest day, when the Sun is furthest north, and winter solstice (22 December) is the shortest, when the sun is furthest south. The two equinoxes are when night and day are virtually equal – spring on 21st March and autumn on 23rd September. Occasionally leap years change these dates.

English Heritage will endeavour to welcome people to the Stone Circle on these four annual 'quarter days'.

People of all ages and from all walks of life take advantage of these opportunities. 30,000 people attended the 2003 summer solstice, and most of them stayed to celebrate and learn from the energy of the time by dancing, singing, holding ceremonies and meeting friends.

Each quarter day is a special opportunity to refocus one's life. Although the period of access is much shorter for the midwinter and equinoctial quarter days, they can be unique in different, more private ways.

Unfortunately none of those who value these opportunities will be able to benefit from them fully until the site is cleared of the interruptions of modern life – roads and traffic; the busy visitors centre; and the tunnel from the car park to the Stone Circle, with its

## Midsummer sunrise at Stonehenge

brave but not entirely successful attempt to transport us back to Neolithic times.

The Stonehenge Project inspires both hope and impatience to return to the open Stonehenge enjoyed up to and during the 19th Century. Some may have reservations about the final routing of the A303, yet those who have experienced the balanced healing this ancient World Heritage Site offers to our modern society, cannot wait to wander freely once more over a cleansed and open Stonehenge.

*Roy Gillett is President of the Astrological Association of Great Britain. He is a member of the Solstice Operational Planning Committee and has helped negotiate and organise access for Stonehenge quarter day access since 1998.*

*Sun, Moon & Stonehenge and A Key To Stonehenge by Robin Heath are published by Bluestone Press email: skyhenge@zetnet.co.uk*

## New investigation uncovers Neolithic axe head

The landscape around Stonehenge and Avebury has yielded more of its secrets during a new investigation. Archaeologists from Wessex Archaeology, funded by English Heritage, have found a polished stone axe head from the Neolithic period, dating to 3000 BC-2500 BC, along with a leaf-shaped arrowhead from the same period.



The neolithic axe

This type of axe, which usually had a wooden 'handle', would have been used to cut down trees, though the head of this one is unused. The stone it was made from is not local.

The archaeologists spent three weeks in late summer walking 90 hectares (222 acres) of private land around the monuments looking for prehistoric flint. The finds were made near Stonehenge.

Andy Crockett, Project Manager for Wessex Archaeology, said: "The axe head is a very interesting find because it relates to a period in our past when farmers first started to chop down trees to start growing crops and keeping livestock."

The project is part of a plan to improve the conservation of the area by turning arable land into pasture. This will mean that the land is no longer

ploughed, a process that can destroy important archaeological remains.

The field walking was carried out just before the land reverted to pasture. The land surveyed is all within a kilometre of Stonehenge or Avebury, including West Kennet Long Barrow and Normanton Down Barrows.

The project is seen as a step towards the long-term conservation of the Stonehenge landscape.



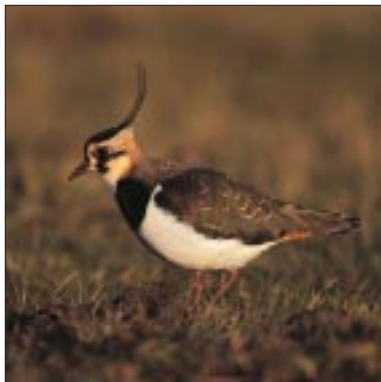
Archaeologists spent three weeks walking fields near Stonehenge

## A rich landscape for birds through the seasons

Peter Exley of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds talks about some of birds that can be seen in the World Heritage Site

The World Heritage Site is home to a number of rare and exciting birds. Walk over the grasslands in summer and you will be treated to an orchestra of avian virtuosi. Skylarks ascend into invisibility, yet their beautiful song can still be heard far overhead. Corn buntings sing their weird jangling song from gateposts. Diminutive quails utter their 'wet-my-lips' calls while remaining stubbornly hidden.

You don't have to wait for summer to get out the field glasses – winter at Stonehenge can be an equally



Lapwing

rewarding place, though for a rather different bird community. Skylarks can still be found in large flocks searching for food. They are joined by flocks of argumentative starlings and house

sparrows, two species once much commoner but now 'red listed' as of high conservation concern.

Other much-declined birds of farmland can also be encountered in small numbers in winter – corn buntings, yellowhammers and grey partridges. The lucky visitor may also come across two birds more often associated with estuaries at this time of year. Lapwings or 'peewits', greeny-black and white with a distinctive crest, and golden plovers, in mottled golden plumage, can be seen in flocks of up to 5000 birds, a truly spectacular sight as they wheel in the sky.

Whatever time of year you visit, Stonehenge provides the opportunity to see some of the UK's most interesting birds.

*Peter Exley is Public Affairs Manager, RSPB South of England, based at RSPB Regional HQ, Keble House, Southernhay Gardens, Exeter EX1 1NT. Tel: 01392 432691.*



Skylark

## from the cold

and articulate its views to Project partners and wider stakeholders. His time will be divided between project management and delivering the vision for Stonehenge.

Before joining English Nature, Matt was a science assistant and co-ordinator working for the British Antarctic Survey. He spent more than three years among the bare rock and snow of Signy Island in Antarctica, perhaps as far removed from the chalk downlands of Wiltshire as it is possible to be.

Matt is based at the Trust's Wessex area office near Warminster and can be contacted on 01985 843570.



## Securing a future for the stone curlew

Few people who come to Stonehenge realise that they are visiting one of the last places where they can still glimpse one of Britain's most unusual birds – the stone curlew.

A crow-sized, sandy-coloured bird with long yellow legs, a large head and relatively long wings and tail, the stone curlew is not really a curlew at all. It belongs to a family of birds known as 'thick knees' (the 'knees' are actually their ankles). The 'stone' part of the name comes from the bird's habit of nesting on bare, stony soil, and the 'curlew' from its eerie curlew-like call.

The stone curlew's most striking feature is its large yellow eyes. These are a clue to its habit of feeding mainly at dawn and dusk.

Stone curlews were once found across much of southern England, but changes in land management



have led to an 85% decline since the 1940s - just over 150 pairs remained by 1989. For the last 15 years the RSPB has been working with landowners and farmers to provide the right conditions for them, with considerable success – the UK population has now increased to over 240 pairs.

There are still only two core populations, in the Brecklands of East Anglia and here in Wessex. Stone curlews need chalk grassland rich in invertebrates and bare areas to nest on. Stonehenge provides exciting opportunities to see these rare birds; several pairs are now nesting within the World Heritage Site, while the creation of new areas of chalk grassland should increase the number.

Did those who erected Stonehenge see stone curlews? It is very likely. The RSPB will be working closely with our Stonehenge partners to ensure that future generations will also be able to see and hear this fascinating bird.

For further information, contact the RSPB Stone Curlew Project, Enterprise House, Cherry Orchard Lane, Salisbury SP2 7LD. Tel: 01722 427230/2