

Moments of Magick at the Stones 2000

Me, I haven't rebounded on Earth since the Stones. Not yet. I'm a day back and my head is still somewhere on that wind, rain and mist-filled Plain of Salisbury. The Y2K solstice party seemed to be full of good vibes. No cause during the 20th or 21st of June for Jack Straw to blame travellers of any kind for anything in particular, apart from having a good time!

My only, and relatively minor gripe, was English Heritage. They need their knuckles gently rapping for playing pass the parcel with a few hundred of us on the afternoon leading up to the solstice. At about 3.30 p.m. the police asked us to move out of the main Stonehenge car park to a lay-by about three miles away up on the edge of the Larkhall military range. About thirty of us had a few hours gently partying and wondering whether we had been effectively separated and dumped in Army-land. A Centurian tank loomed ominously about 400 yards away and convoys of trucks and jeeps passed every few minutes. Having put us on the verge, the police were stuck with an increasing number of people and vehicles cluttering up the roadsides for miles around the Stones. Finally, the police told us the Stones car park was being opened up by English Heritage at 6.30 p.m. Not hearing anymore, our group of about ten vehicles nudged its way back towards the parking area. We were still excluded; road-blocked, and the



police were stuck with the job of urging the Heritage to get their act together, while locals had to contend with hundreds of our clans blocking up the link roads. Eventually, and seemingly reluctantly, it was nearly 8 p.m. when the parking area was opened up. A big communal sigh of relief and joy. 11.30 p.m. for opening the actual Stones seems fair, but everyone, especially those with live-in vehicles, children, dogs etc. need to park-up sensibly, well before that time.



In the park-up field, I met with quite a lot of old time new Travellers, who shared many memories of Stonehenge festivals and the battles of the Beanfield and Stoney Cross; a few Romanies, some of whom travel with new Travellers; newer visitors who've never had the chance to be in the



Stones (legally) since the 1985 clamp-down; smiling and gentle, Scottish and Irish (I think) Travellers in a group of about 15 bow tops and hand drawn; and many Druids, Pagans, ravers

and more. Drums started a drumming, small sound systems pumped out trance sounds and the Travellers rode their bare back horses around the fresh cut field as a tableau for a splendid sunset.



As the gates let the multitude in at just before 11.30 p.m., the Druid/Pagan alliance performed a really clever opening to the ceremonies. Stretching a good



fifty yards from the gate as human finger pointing towards the Stones, they constructed a human pergola, with their staves interlinked in a triumphant arch. All people entering the site were invited, and obliged, to walk singly within the corridor of paired elders of the pagan persuasions.

"You are one of us - you are a druid - you are anointed into our brethren" we were each told amidst the drumming, drones and chanting.

Fire twirlers, musicians, dancers, and many multifarious garbed-ones. Like all those present my mind raced and jumped wildly between hundreds of sound and vision spectacles. One moment a mystic chant, then rhythmic drumming and then Tibetan hand bells.

Towards the expected sunrise, the elements conspired a localised tempest of wind, mist and rain. Spirits weren't thwarted though. Indeed the tempo raised in series of cacophonies, wilder drums, waving wands of fire, various processions of cloaked Pagans and Druids performing their rites. No sign of the sun, but no dampening of spirits – if anything the reverse. The Stones once more belonged to the people. An icon of celebration. A fine piece of very British whimsy, and thankfully a million miles (or at least fifteen years) removed from the clashes of the eighties, or the English football supporters in Euro 2000.

Magick moments indeed.



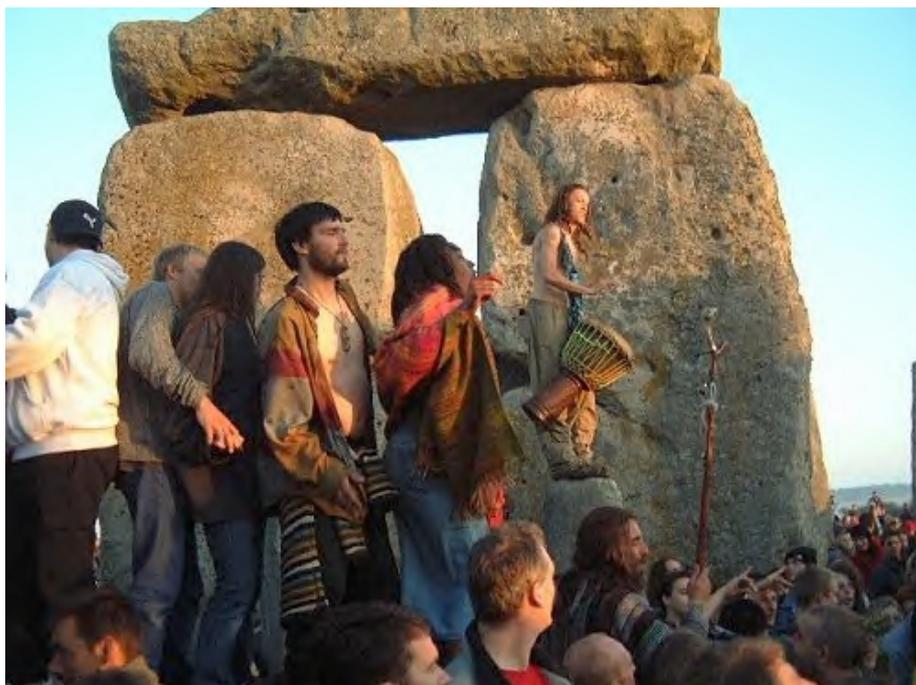
Alan D.

Stonehenge Summer Solstice 2001

Yesterday morning at 4.57 am I sat amidst the giant stones of Stonehenge with 15,000 others watching the sun rise on solstice morning. Wow!

For the last fifteen years this is something that I never dreamed could or would happen. The police had stopped the Stonehenge Festival in the tumultuous year 1985 when they had a pitched battle with New Travellers.

Since 1985 Stonehenge has been closed to the public on solstice morning. Many people have been fighting for the right to stand and watch the sun rise in this exceptional historic monument. The police have persisted with exclusion zones however, until last year when they opened things up successfully. This year (with no Glastonbury Festival running this week) many people travelled to the stones to celebrate midsummer's day. There were approximately 15,000 people there; singing, dancing, drumming, chanting, juggling and swinging lit poi. It was fabulous. The stones were completely open.



The police were there of course, hassling most New Traveller vehicles that turned up, but they generally kept a low profile. They had organised parking a few fields away. Welfare was provided and other organisations were there such as the RSPCA and St John's Ambulance. Even toilets were provided and fresh drinking water. There was the odd food and drinks stand



too, all well away from the stones themselves. A private security firm had been employed by English Heritage to police the site too. It was all very low key though as everyone tromped down the road to reach the stones.

Now, was it necessary to have all of this organisation? Of course not. People can easily sort themselves out to watch the sun rise at a historic monument. You don't need loos or food, just a little time and

freedom. A sensation of overkill was felt when we saw van loads of coppers sitting around wasting their time. This is very frustrating – the State is maintaining control of New Travellers by providing them with limited access to Stonehenge on this day. The Travellers aren't allowed to stop or stay at all and soon enough they'll be suffering police action via eviction elsewhere in the country. But at least we were all there for this special moment. At least the

numerous New Travellers who arrived were allowed on this sacred site. It doesn't mean the fight is over, but from this position we can move on, we can fight for more freedom to be, to travel and to roam, to celebrate according to our wishes, rather than those of the State. We can visit Stonehenge on solstice morning which is fantastic, but we mustn't forget the past or allow the State to con us into thinking they are not still controlling this freedom.

Zoë James is a lecturer at the University of Plymouth (her piece © 2000-2001. e-Festivals)

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Friends; Oz; International Times; Squall; schNEWS; Stonehenge Campaign Free Newsletter; Greenleaf; Green Anarchist; Monolith News; Stone; Wheel Life Publications; FFT Newsletter; TSC Newsletter; Time Out; Wake Up!; Green Collective Mailing; Festival Eye; Frontline. And Undercurrents and Conscious Cinema videos.

A big thanks to everyone who has helped on any of the Enabler books and contributed words, pictures and ideas over many years.

Useful sites for related information (obviously these can change):

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