


From: 
To: [A303 Stonehenge](#)
Subject: Objection to proposed A303 Stonehenge tunnel and road project.
Date: 04 April 2022 10:14:10

Dear Sir/Madam,

Speaking as a member of the public, I strongly object to the proposed A303 Stonehenge tunnel and road project for the reasons I give you in this email.

My starting point is that it will seriously damage the very rare, hunter-gatherer site called Blick Mead (BM) which is nationally important for the following reasons:

- Archaeologists have now proven that it dates from 9,500 years ago, was in continuous occupation as a 'home base' for more than 3,000 years and since then has much evidence of re-visiting and a variety of other activities.
- It has a 7,000-year-old specially constructed platform of flint cobbles, under which were ritually preserved auroch hoof prints.
- It has the first proven dwelling in the Stonehenge landscape and this is 6,000 years old.
- All of the above dates have been proven by carbon dating. Many other items have also been carbon dated and it is the chronology of all the dates which is so vital to understanding BM.
- A total of 70,000 Mesolithic worked flint tools have been found, including tranchet axes, burins, blades, very tiny microliths, a slate Horsham Point, and a rare ripple-flaked oblique arrowhead. Prior to BM, only a few dozen Mesolithic worked flint tools had ever been found in the entire WHS. All of this shows that BM was a well established Mesolithic settlement.

- Also found were over 2,500 pieces of animal bone and over 140kg of burnt flint, which show that red deer, wild boar, and aurochs were on the Mesolithic menu. Aurochs are huge beasts and this shows that large hunting parties were organised to go out and trap them and then bring them back to BM for cooking and feasting etc.
- BM has a natural spring, in which were found dozens of ritually deposited votive offerings (to their 'Gods') which indicates that BM was a special place to the people who lived there.
- And the BM archaeologists even excavated a small standing stone...a foretaste of what was to come!
- BM is described by some archaeologists as 'the cradle of Stonehenge'.

BM is positioned between the proposed eastern tunnel portal, and the enormous flyover and roundabout intersection of four-lane dual-carriageway with two feeder-lanes joining that and just 25 meters away from the current dig site! This massive amount of construction etc will dry out the site over a few years. BM is on a natural spring, which has been consistently damp since the last ice age and this has meant that the outstanding array of finds there can be carbon dated. All these carbon dates prove thousands of years of continuous occupation, which is very nearly twice as old as Stonehenge! BM is one of the most significant Mesolithic (Stonehenge is Neolithic) sites in Britain and is beginning to unlock the secrets of how humans gradually evolved from being hunter-gatherers and into the culture of people who built the wider Stonehenge ritual landscape. If this disastrous road project goes ahead, BM will dry out and that will destroy all the organic material which proves the carbon dates. That is a scientific fact. The carbon dates are the key to interpreting all the finds and putting them in chronological context. In summary, BM is the Rosetta Stone for understanding the wider Stonehenge

landscape intelligently, and Britain must not allow it to be damaged by the ignorant vandalism of this road project!

As well as the damage to BM, there will also be damage where the western tunnel portal emerges into the Normanton Down Barrows cemetery group which world famous archaeologists Mike Parker Pearson says is nationally important and the densest concentration of Neolithic long barrows in Britain. These are around 500 years older than Stonehenge and much rarer than Bronze Age round barrows. Furthermore, he says that the whole area around the western tunnel portal needs thorough archaeological investigation as it is likely to be the settlement where the builders of Stonehenge's Bronze Age period lived.

He says "It is clear that Highways England are not prepared to put in the work that is normally required for research excavations in the WHS and this will result in the loss of half a million artefacts, along with an unquantifiable loss of knowledge about Stonehenge and its builders."

Furthermore, UNESCO say that if the tunnel and road project goes ahead then the WHS will be irreparably damaged. They also say they will take away WHS status and that would be extremely damaging to the UK's reputation.

The project will also make a mockery of Britain's commitments to reduce carbon emissions which are causing climate-change.

I add that I don't think the project is value for money as the cost-benefit ratio seems to be appalling. Especially as the figures have not been updated for a long time, or to adapt to the changing economic circumstances.

Furthermore, there are alternative routes that would cost far less and wouldn't damage the WHS. For example the southern route, which local people say is being blocked by some very

influential and wealthy NIMBYs.

There is also the option of a longer tunnel though that would be more expensive.

There is also the option of leaving things as they are, which gives people the inspiring view of Stonehenge as they drive past. This point is made well by Simon Jenkins, former chairman of the National Trust, in his letter to The Times newspaper.

“The decision to tunnel under Stonehenge is a tragedy. Apart from the damage to the landscape and archaeology, the tunnel will deprive millions of drivers of one of the most exhilarating views in England, that of the great henge rising into view over the Wiltshire downs.”

And even when traffic slows down, people can ponder over how ancient hunter-gatherers emerged from Blick Mead to build Stonehenge, in what must be the biggest and longest lasting community project in British history (around 1,500 years). A wonderful example of selfless dedication by people to something a lot more meaningful than the selfish desire to save a few minutes time.

Please, please, please, don't allow the A303 tunnel and road project to go ahead as it will cause serious and irrevocable vandalism to Britain's precious wider Stonehenge landscape.

Yours very sincerely,

Paul Gossage.

