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"V roku 2008 výskumníci zo Stonehenge Riverside Project zistili, že Stonehenge bol postavený takmer o 500 rokov skôr, než sa pôvodne myslelo"

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Stonehenge was built to unify Britain, researchers conclude

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| Researchers believe Stonehenge was built in the "centre of the world" for prehistoric people

Building Stonehenge was a way to unify the people of Stone Age Britain, researchers have concluded.

Teams working on the Stonehenge Riverside Project believe the circle was built after a long period of conflict between east and west Britain.

Researchers also believe the stones, from southern England and west Wales, symbolize different communities.

Prof Mike Parker Pearson said building Stonehenge required everyone "to pull together" in "an act of unification".

The Stonehenge Riverside Project (SRP) has been investigating the archaeology of Stonehenge and its landscape for the past 10 years.

In 2008, SRP researchers found that Stonehenge had been erected almost 500 years earlier than had originally been thought.

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Now teams from the universities of Sheffield, Manchester, Southampton, Bournemouth and University College London, have concluded that when the stone circle was built "there was a growing island-wide culture".

"The same styles of houses, pottery and other material forms were used from Orkney to the south coast - this was very different to the regionalism of previous centuries," said Prof Parker Pearson, from University of Sheffield.

"Stonehenge itself was a massive undertaking, requiring the labour of thousands to move stones from as far away as west Wales, shaping them and erecting them.

"Just the work itself, requiring everyone literally to pull together, would have been an act of unification."

Stonehenge may also have been built in a place that already had special significance for prehistoric Britons.

'Centre of the world'

The SRP team found that its solstice-aligned avenue sits upon a series of natural landforms that, by chance, form an axis between the directions of midsummer sunrise and midwinter sunset.

"When we stumbled across this extraordinary natural arrangement of the sun's path being marked in the land, we realised that prehistoric people selected this place to build Stonehenge because of its pre-ordained significance," said Mr Parker Pearson.