

3.3.21 To identify evidence that supports or refutes the theory that Stonehenge was used as an astronomical calendar.

Cut out each box and decide if the evidence it contains supports or refutes the theory that Stonehenge could have been used as an astronomical calendar. Stick them into the correct column on your Support or Refute Activity Sheet.

In 1720, William Stukeley made an accurate scientific diagram of all the features of Stonehenge, and noticed that the Avenue and the Heel Stone are precisely aligned with the midsummer sunrise.

In 1963, Gerald Hawkins published his scientific analysis of Stonehenge. He had used a computer to discover over a hundred different alignments with the Sun, Moon and stars. He also suggested that the Aubrey Holes were used to predict lunar eclipses.

The Heel Stones were added over 1000 years after the first stage of Stonehenge was constructed, so they could not have been used to view the sunrise when Stonehenge was first built.

Some scientists think that the ancient Britons could not have observed or known about astronomical events such as eclipses. Many lunar eclipses would not even be visible from Stonehenge.

Scientists have found evidence that suggests that the Avenue leading into Stonehenge was naturally formed in the ice age, not dug out by people.

In 1966, Fred Hoyle concluded that the 28-day lunar cycle could have been measured by regularly moving a marker from stone to stone. He also suggested that by moving a marker by two holes every 13 days, the ancient Britons could have measured the Earth's annual movement around the Sun.