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Opening extract from

The Secrets of Stonehenge

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Mighty Sarsen Stones

ABOUT 4,500 YEARS AGO

After the bluestones, giant sarsen stones were brought from the Marlborough Downs, 50 kilometres away. Some of these stones weigh as much as ten minibuses! Each one was dragged to Stonehenge with only Stone-Age technology. This proves how clever and resourceful our ancestors must have been.

Heave-Ho!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Pull!

and we carry 'em to the front.

We pick up the rollers from the back...

Careful!

Mind out!

Planning the route and clearing the way for the stones' journey would have been a massive project.



Chopping down trees...



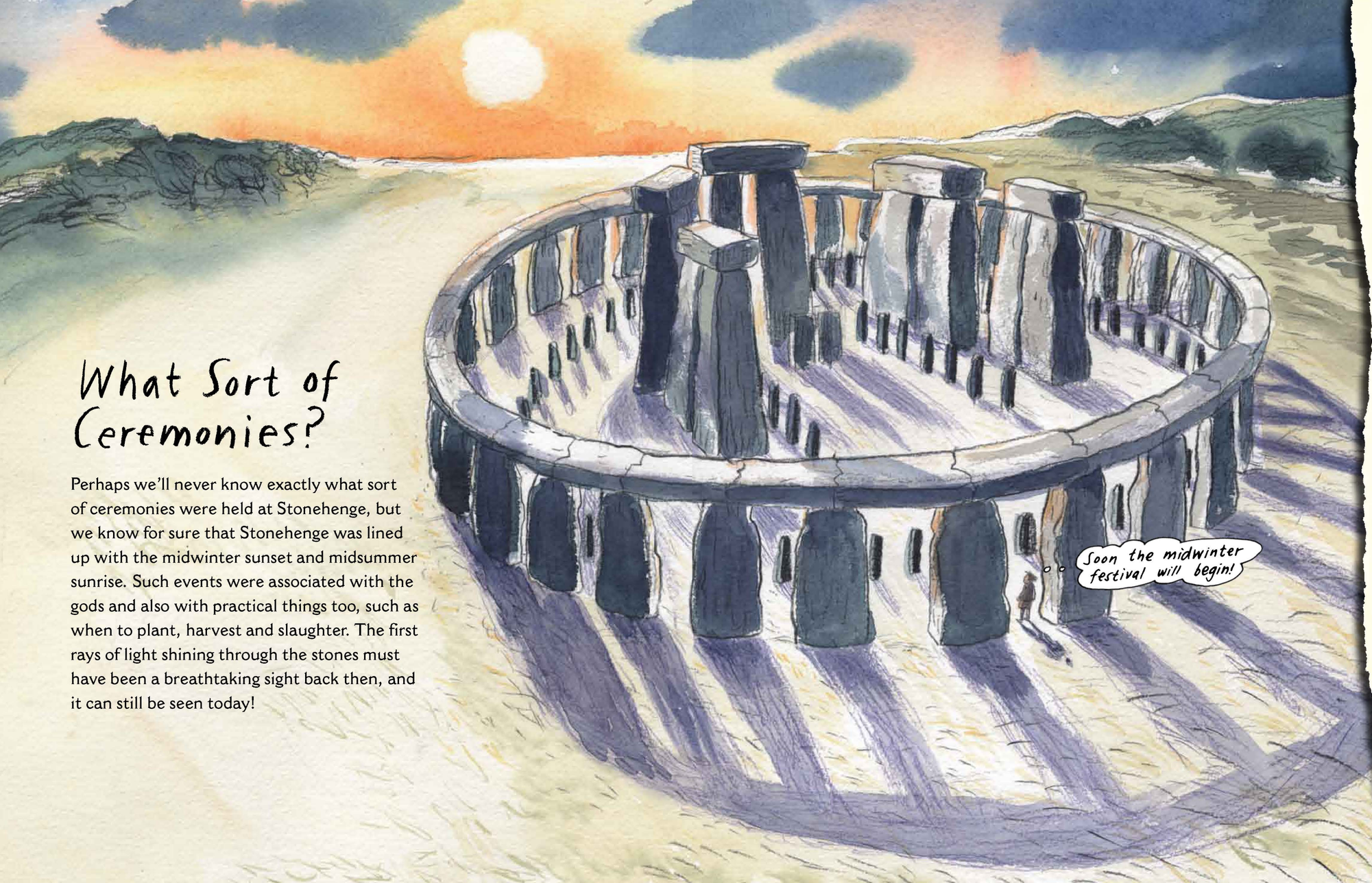
shifting rocks...



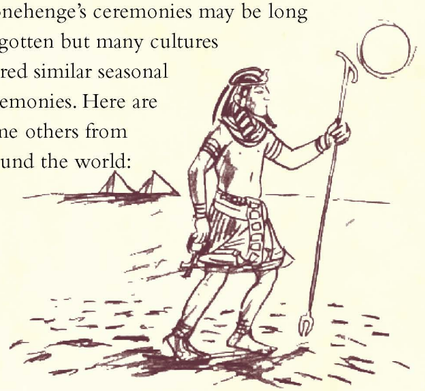
and clearing undergrowth.

What Sort of Ceremonies?

Perhaps we'll never know exactly what sort of ceremonies were held at Stonehenge, but we know for sure that Stonehenge was lined up with the midwinter sunset and midsummer sunrise. Such events were associated with the gods and also with practical things too, such as when to plant, harvest and slaughter. The first rays of light shining through the stones must have been a breathtaking sight back then, and it can still be seen today!



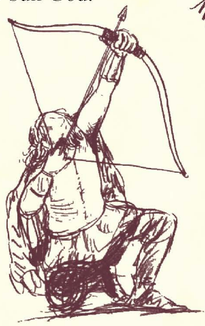
Stonehenge's ceremonies may be long forgotten but many cultures shared similar seasonal ceremonies. Here are some others from around the world:



The Ancient Egyptians held 'the ceremony of the sun's walking stick'. Native American tribes also had similar ceremonies.

The Ancient Egyptians also sacrificed pigs because they believed them to be enemies of the Sun God.





In many cultures around the world archers have fired burning arrows at the solstice sun to give it strength. Perhaps the skeletons found at Stonehenge played some part in solstice celebrations?