

Archeologists worry planned tunnel could ruin chance to understand history before Stonehenge

December 22 2014, by Bob Yirka



Stonehenge. Image: Wikipedia.

Many archeologists in Britain are decrying plans by the government to build a tunnel to relieve traffic congestion near Stonehenge—a world heritage site, as doing so would like damage Blick Mead, a Mesolithic encampment found nearby just this past October.

Among the most vocal is David Jaques of the University of Buckingham and leader of the team that discovered the early encampment site—he has told the press that it's possible that [artifacts](#) yet to be discovered at the site could offer clues regarding the history of the area prior to the construction of Stonehenge, possibly offering new clues about the people

involved in building the famous structure and their reasons for putting together such a massive and enduring structure. He has suggested that the government scrap plans for a [tunnel](#), the construction of which could cause damage to artifacts at Blick Mead, which is just 2.4km from Stonehenge.

Artifacts found thus far include charcoal dated to around 4000 BC and evidence of "feasting" (burnt flint, other tools and bones of an ancient cow known as aurochs) by people sitting around a fire. Jaques and other archeologists working the site believe the encampment represents a link between early hunter-gatherers that returned to Great Britain after the last Ice Age, and on up into the Neolithic—representing the time before and after Stonehenge was constructed. Jugues believes the early people would have been attracted to the site by the natural spring that flowed through and claims that building the tunnel would wreck the site, preventing proper study of other artifacts that have not yet been found, some of which might include evidence of dwellings. He and his team have also noted that a rare type of algae has been found at the site which resulted in color changing stones, the only examples ever found in Britain.

Officials with the country's Department of Transportation in response to complaints by the archeologists promised to consult with "interested parties" before construction on the tunnel would commence. The government has said the tunnel would relieve congestion and improve the setting for Stonehenge, allowing for better access by visitors. Jaques maintains that plans for construction should be stopped because the [dig site](#) could ultimately offer evidence to help answer questions about Stonehenge that have been asked for hundreds, if not thousands of years—what is the real story of Stonehenge's past?

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