

Thousands celebrate summer solstice at Stonehenge

June 21 2018



The sun rises through the stones at Stonehenge as crowds of people gather to celebrate the dawn of the longest day in the UK, in Wiltshire, England, Thursday June 21, 2018. The neolithic Wiltshire monument is built along the solstice alignment of the summer sunrise and the winter sunset. (Ben Birchall/PA via AP)

Thousands watched the sun glint over the horizon at Stonehenge on Thursday, celebrating the summer solstice at the Neolithic stone circle.

The sun rose behind the Heel Stone, which traditionally marks the spot on the horizon for the sunrise, at 4.52 a.m. Thursday (0352 GMT; 23:52 EDT Wednesday).

Crowds cheered and raised mobile phones for images as the rays flooded through the monument and announced the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

Wiltshire Police estimated that 9,500 people attended and that 600 more celebrated at the nearby ancient monument in Avebury.

English Heritage, which cares for historic sites, tweeted that it was the "perfect morning for the #SummerSolstice sunrise at Stonehenge."

The event passed peacefully. There were no arrests at Stonehenge, but two people were arrested at Avebury, one on suspicion of being drunk and disorderly and another on suspicion of driving while under the influence.

Stonehenge, which is believed to be 4,500 years old, is a World Heritage site known for its alignment with the movements of the sun. Thousands travel there to mark the solstices in summer and winter.



People take photos as the sun rises and shines through the stones at Stonehenge as crowds of people gather to celebrate the dawn of the longest day in the UK, in Wiltshire, England, Thursday June 21, 2018. The neolithic Wiltshire monument is built along the solstice alignment of the summer sunrise and the winter sunset. (Ben Birchall/PA via AP)



A man gestures between stones as the sun rises through the stones at Stonehenge as crowds of people gather to celebrate the dawn of the longest day in the UK, in Wiltshire, England, Thursday June 21, 2018. The neolithic Wiltshire monument is built along the solstice alignment of the summer sunrise and the winter sunset. (Ben Birchall/PA via AP)



A woman twirls a hula-hoop the sun rises at Stonehenge as crowds of people gathered to celebrate the dawn of the longest day in the UK, in Wiltshire, England, Thursday, June 21, 2018. The neolithic Wiltshire monument is built along the solstice alignment of the summer sunrise and the winter sunset. (Ben Birchall/PA via AP)

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