THE INDIVIDUAL IN PREHISTORY



Could Stonehenge Skeletons Be Its Bronze Age Builders? – 24 Hour Museum



Photo: are these the remains of the builders of Stonehenge? ? Elaine Wakefield, Wessex Archaeology.

Archaeologists working near Stonehenge have unearthed a grave containing the remains of seven men who they believe might have helped to build Europe?s most famous prehistoric monument.

Discovered at Boscombe Down and dating back to the beginning of the Bronze Age – around 2,300 BC ? the men appear to have been alive during the period when many of Stonehenge?s vast megaliths were brought from Wales.

It is this, coupled with the results of tests on the men?s teeth that show they were almost certainly born in Wales, that has led experts from Wessex Archaeology to suggest these men were engaged in building Stonehenge.

“In medieval times, people believed that the stones could only have been brought to Stonehenge by Merlin the Wizard,” said Dr Andrew Fitzpatrick of Wessex Archaeology.

“For the first time we have found the mortal remains of one of the families who were almost certainly involved in this monumental task.”

This is the second (or third) recent attempt to connect individual burials with the making of Stonehenge (see my comments on). They come from Wessex Archaeology.

OK – so let's accept that people built Stonehenge, not spacemen or giants or wizards.

These people were individuals and members of families, yes, but not necessarily in the way that we understand individual identity.

That there was an individual designer is out of the question – Stonehenge was built and remodelled over many centuries. Many thousands of people were involved in building and using it.

So what is this fascination with finding the "king" who ordered the building of the monument, or the architect, or the builders?

It is a contemporary desire to touch the past and experience some kind of intimate personal link (to look upon the remains of the mind that inspired what is still spectacularly with us now), and in so doing to somehow deny the loss of self that comes with ruin, with the abrasions of time.