

**Friends of Fairfax County Archaeology and Cultural Resources
(FOFA) Annual Membership Meeting**

Saturday, April 27, 2024, 10:00 AM

James Lee Center, 2855 Annandale Rd, Falls Church, VA

Please join FOFA in welcoming our guest speaker:

Dr. Stephen Potter

Regional Archaeologist Emeritus, National Park Service

The World of Stonehenge: A Personal Perspective

In June of 2022, my family and I traveled to England to see the first exhibition organized by the British Museum about the era of Stonehenge, bringing together objects from 35 museums and research institutions across western Europe, Britain, and Ireland. Built around the same time as the pyramids of Egypt, Stonehenge took similar effort and organization to construct. To understand the purpose of the great stone monument constructed on Salisbury Plain, it was necessary to consider the culture of its builders and their connections with equally powerful societies across Europe.

Beginning in the time of hunter gatherers, the exhibition explored the environmental and cultural impact of the earliest farmers, whose transformative way of life gradually spread across Europe before reaching Britain around 6,000 years ago. The new economic basis introduced dramatic changes in social relationships and in attitudes to nature, property, and landscape. The arrival of peoples from across Europe 4,500 years ago brought different beliefs and innovative technologies, such as metal working, which stimulated and changed monument building. These migrations and international connections have been revealed through recent developments in archaeological science, shedding new light on the character of the communities who came together at Stonehenge.

By 4,000 years ago, Stonehenge was a focal point in a cemetery landscape. The grave goods from this period reveal the beliefs and impressive connectivity of communities, as portable objects began to carry greater spiritual and social importance and communal monuments began to fade in importance. With an increase in cross-Channel connectivity and trade between 1500 and 800 BCE, there was also a rise in warfare and a warrior class.

My presentation ends with excursions to Stonehenge, Avebury (the largest henge and megalithic circle in Britain), West Kennet long barrow, and Silbury Hill.



FOFA will hold a brief meeting prior to the presentation to elect new officers to the Board. FOFA is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization that serves as a friend's group to the Fairfax County Park Authority's Archaeology and Collection Branch. *Contact:* fofarch@gmail.com
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