



Dear friends and supporters,

We have two brilliant events to report barely within a month of each other.

**The first event** was on 16 January at Wiltshire Museum which was live streamed. If you missed it you can watch the recording online [here](#).



Kate's good friend and artist, Mark Wickham unveiled his painting *A Favourite Walk with Kate Fielden*, which you can glimpse here, but will be shared with you once we can photograph it in its final position. Following a much appreciated viewing of Mark's painting, Tom Holland gave a terrific talk about the weirdness of Wiltshire's history, ancient and modern. Below is a snapshot of one of his more eccentric anecdotes.



That same evening, with regret we said goodbye to our wonderful chairman, John Adams, who has stepped down. We first met John on Twitter, and then again at the Examination in Salisbury. He readily agreed to become a director of Save Stonehenge World Heritage Site. More significantly John later agreed to be Chairman of the Stonehenge Alliance.

As it happened John's appointment was shortly followed by Kate's untimely death. How lucky we were that John was prepared to step into Kate's shoes with skilful leadership and astonishing commitment against what he called *"this wretched road"*. Little did John realise what he had agreed to: most of his waking moments were taken up with fielding a flood of press interest, scrutinising reams of evidence and complex legal arguments, supporting events with a small team of activists and finally, ensuring there was a legacy of action. The committee gifted John a framed replica of Mark Wickham's painting in huge appreciation of his determination to get us through these last years, wishing him well as he resumes his 'normal' busy life.

We are enormously grateful to Mike Birkin, South West Campaign Organiser for Friends of the Earth, for agreeing to take on the role of acting chairman.



*'Connecting South West England: in place of A303/A358 widening' is a pragmatic way to bring real improvements, using a fraction of the savings that come from the cancellation of road schemes along the A303.*

**The second event**, on 15th February in Plymouth, was a presentation of a recently completed report, *'Connecting South West England'*, at Labour South West's Conference. It had been commissioned by our allies, Transport Action Network (TAN), written by well respected transport consultant, Jim Steer of Greengauge 21. The Stonehenge Alliance was pleased to support this work as a more strategic and sustainable way forward to connecting people and business to, and within, the South West.

The report recommends an action plan that recognises that

- (a) public finances are tight, hence the report's modest proposals, which focus on long standing weaknesses, and
- (b) that the South West needs to attract new transport investment to improve access to all the new homes planned for a region often cut off during extreme weather events.

So action on transport connecting the South West of England is essential and urgent.



The report has been well received in [the media](#) and by the 30 or so people at the fringe event (above left), sparking a lively discussion on priorities and action. As Jim Steer said, there are plenty of regional policies to support our report but there is a lack of action. Above right, from left to right are Jim Steer (standing), Chris Todd (director of TAN), Kate Freeman (SW Friends of the Earth/Stonehenge Alliance) and Suzanne Keene (CPRE/Stonehenge Alliance).

TAN's transport work needs active promotion which we will continue to support. If you can, we would encourage supporters to share this proposal with other interested parties. You can read the key points in [our blog](#).

As mentioned in previous Campaign Updates, we are also investigating future action for stronger protection of World Heritage Sites through the planning system to ensure that an extraordinary landscape like Stonehenge is less vulnerable to road building ambitions. We will be in touch when we have further news.

With very best wishes,

***The Stonehenge Alliance team***

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Some highlights from Tom Holland's talk: 'The dark, the light and the weird: a brief history of Wiltshire'



Tom Holland's talk ranged from the personal and ephemeral to the enduring and fascinating nuggets of Wiltshire's history, marking a fitting end to our ultimately successful campaign. Woven in was his appreciation of Kate's inspired guardianship of the "sacred, weird and haunted landscape [saved] for future generations".



Inevitably the Salisbury poisonings were highlighted but Tom's reaction to what happened in Salisbury was unconventional. He started by echoing Pugin's view of Salisbury Cathedral: "I've travelled all over Europe and I have seen nothing like this." Nor indeed had Constable seen anything like it. But not far from the cathedral an act of ruthless brutality took place.





Like the rest of us, the poisonings on the streets of Salisbury shocked and angered Tom. Like so many, he wanted to mark an emotional reaction, not with words though, but with an ancient talisman that would remind him of this terrible violence.



Tom bought a historic coin bearing the inscription 'God in Ser' that had been minted in Old Sarum, a place that offered protection from the raids of the murderous Vikings, a reminder of another shameful part of Wiltshire's history. You can listen to this section 42 minutes into the video [here](#).



On display at the Museum, where people had pre-talk drinks, was a portrait of Kate Fielden in her garden at the foot of the Salisbury Plain, also painted by Mark Wickham.

### [ABOUT THE STONEHENGE ALLIANCE](#)



*The Stonehenge Alliance was set up in 2002 to protect the Stonehenge World Heritage Site from further damage. It has campaigned against the current road scheme since its inception in 2014. It is appalled by the last Government's decision to go ahead with the short tunnel and road widening project in the face of:*

- *strong advice from its Planning Inspectorate not to proceed,*
- *UNESCO's World Heritage Committee's condemnation, and*

- *the High Court's quashing of the scheme in 2021.*

*The Labour Government cancelled the scheme on 29 July 2024 on the grounds of "low value and unaffordable commitment". An application to the Supreme Court is in progress to challenge the Court of Appeal's judgment.*

*The Stonehenge Alliance is run by a small team of volunteers, supported by Ancient Sacred Landscape Network; Campaign to Protect Rural England; Friends of the Earth; Rescue, The British Archaeological Trust; Transport Action Network and many individuals in the UK and worldwide.*

### **Protecting Stonehenge WHS for the long term**

Two legacy projects to permanently protect the Stonehenge landscape from development are being progressed in 2025. The first is a study of the parlous state of our railway network in the south west with recommendations for priority investment that is being promoted widely.

The second is an investigation into strengthening the planning status of UK World Heritage Sites. It will require parliamentary action and wider networking. The work is at an early stage. *Expressions of interest welcome.*

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