

21 JUNE



# MIDSUMMER



## INTO THE LIGHT

*Long days, short nights.  
No-one wants to sleep. It's time  
to celebrate the light!*

For thousands of years people have gathered together to watch the sun rise on June 21. Once, ancient Druid priests gathered at the temple of Stonehenge, UK. At the same time, high in the Big Horn mountains of America, Indians gathered in their own stone circle. All over the northern hemisphere, groups of people came together to watch the sun rise on the longest day of the year.

In Scandinavian countries and in Alaska where the change to summer is most dramatic, celebrations often go right through the light night.

## AN AMAZING ANGLE

*So much fuss about an angle!*

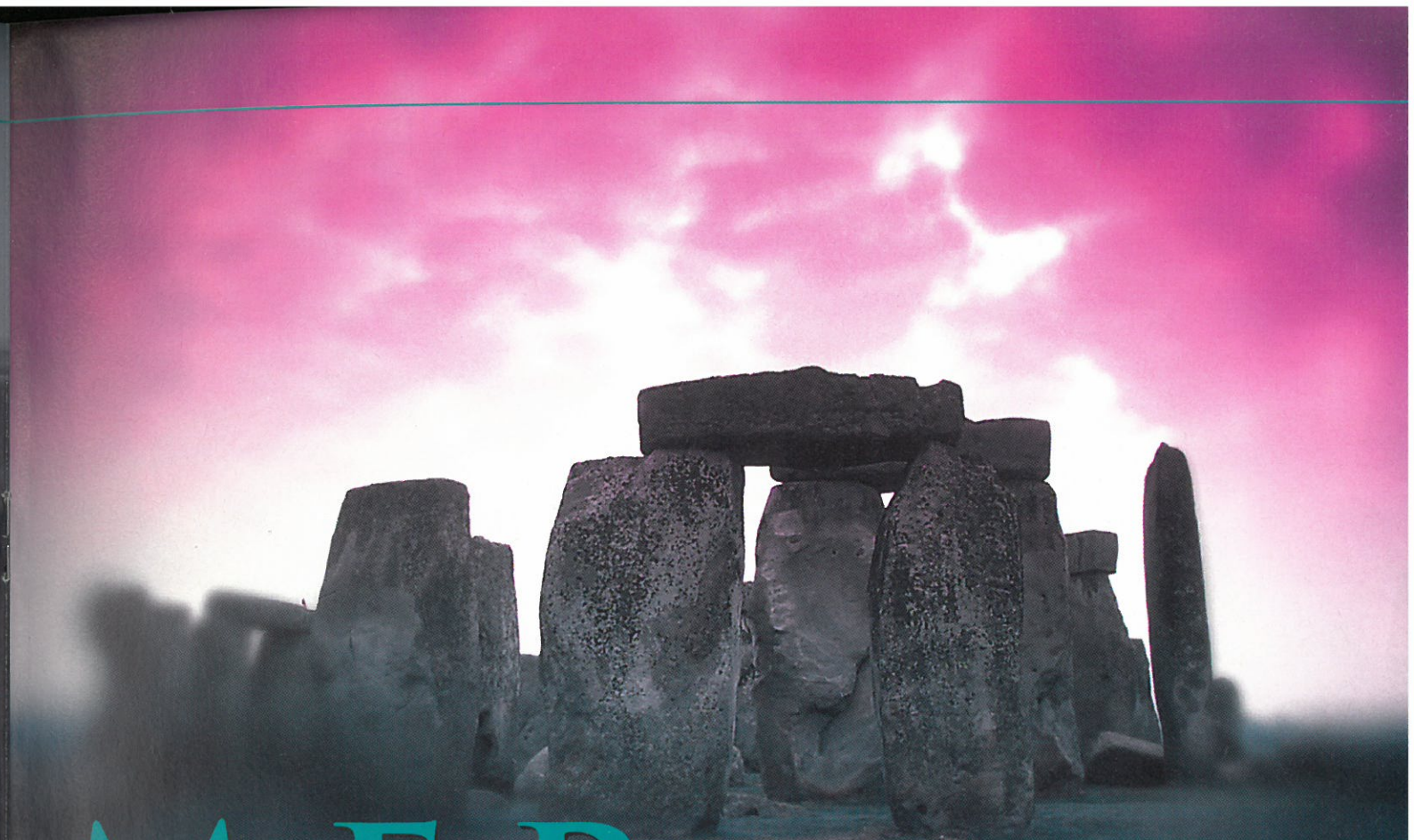
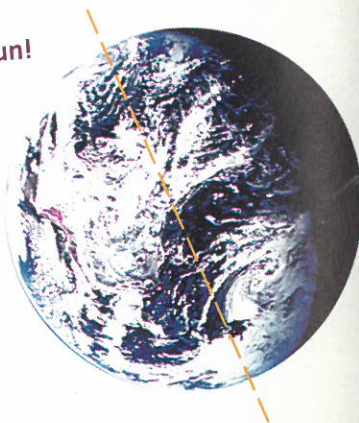
As it goes around the sun the earth is tilted at an angle of 23.5 degrees. So sometimes the northern hemisphere has more light and sometimes the southern hemisphere has more light. That's why we have spring, summer, autumn and winter.

*All that poetry about spring and autumn!*

*All those changes in clothes, in food, in mood!*

*All those holidays in the sun!*

Just because of an angle  
of 23.5 degrees.



## THE HIPPIES ARE COMING!

Stonehenge, UK. Dawn. A line of police stand by the fences. Some are on horses. Some are leaning on their cars, smoking cigarettes. Waiting.

Then it starts.

Far away, across the fields, something is moving. Police radios come to life and the policemen move into a line. Over the fields people are coming. Closer and closer. Straight towards Stonehenge. Some are singing. Some are carrying children. A man with pink hair has a noisy dog. A woman with a rainbow coloured skirt and army boots is dancing as she walks. These are the New Age travellers.

To them Stonehenge is a temple of the sun. To the local authorities it is a historical monument and must be protected.

Year after year there were fights between the New Age travellers and the police at Stonehenge. The travellers won. In 1998 the local authorities said that people are now free to celebrate the sunrise at Stonehenge. The temple of the sun is back in business!



## FACTS ABOUT STONEHENGE

- 1 Stonehenge is as old as the pyramids of Egypt – about 4000 years old.
- 2 The enormous stones have come all the way from Wales, over 300 kilometres away. No-one knows how primitive people were able to transport them.
- 3 The stones are positioned so that stonehenge can be used as a giant clock or calendar.
- 4 In the 1970s a fence was put around the stones to stop tourists from breaking them.