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First published on Wednesday 10 March 2004:

A STONEHENGE OF THE 21st CENTURY

by Geoff Barnes

A giant tidal-driven moon clock - described as the 21st century version of Stone-henge - could soon begin to take shape on the Wirral banks of the Mersey.

The elegant structure, made of glass and comprising a series of concentric rings, will have a diameter wider than Britain's most famous prehistoric mon-ument at Salisbury Plain.

Visible 24 hours a day from land, sea and air, the Aluna Project will be an internationally recognised landmark and a huge tourist attraction.

Land close to the new multi-million pound Space and Astro-nomy Centre at Seacombe Ferry Terminal, has been earmarked for the moon clock venture, which is expected to play a major role in the economic and social rejuve-nation of the Mersey region.

Artist Laura Williams - the London-based project originator - made a special presentation to the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park board and a feasibility study is likely to be ordered.

Powered by the waves, different parts of the artwork will light up according to the phases of the moon. A spokesman for the company said: "Along with the International Space and Astronomy Centre, Aluna will act as a catalyst for the public understanding of science and enhance the direct relationship between the moon, the tides and Merseyside's maritime history.

"It will be a timeless timepiece linking the past to the future and the ocean to the skies. Aluna will be a graceful, breathtaking icon for Liverpool's 800-year-old anni-versary and European City of Culture 2008 celebrations."

Cllr Pat Hackett, Wirral Council cabinet member for econ-omic development, said the visionary project was one of a series of major initiatives which provided the perfect answer for the "moaners" who constantly complained that nothing ever happened in Wirral.

He said: "We have certainly stepped up a gear. People will want to visit Wirral, not only for the moon clock but for all the other tourist attractions - such as the space centre, the rejuvenated New Brighton, the much improved Birkenhead town centre and a

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revamped Hoylake and West Kirby."

Wirral council special initiatives spokesman Howard Mortimer said: "The moon clock will be a large iconic feature on the waterfront, next to the space centre which will link with the celestial skies.

"It will be a 21st century version of Stonehenge."

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