

Weekend Courses 2024-25

Moonlight on Stonehenge and other stone circles

Start date: 6 December 2024 **End date:** 8 December 2024

Venue: Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor: Professor David Jacques **Course Code:** 2425NRX016

Tutor biography

David Jacques field of research explores the use of the Stonehenge landscape in the Mesolithic period (8500BC-4000BC). Since 2005 he has been the Project Director of an internationally significant Mesolithic archaeological site, one mile from Stonehenge. His team has discovered the oldest occupation site in the Stonehenge area, the likely place where the communities who built the first monuments at Stonehenge lived. These discoveries have contributed significantly to a new understanding of the initial settlement patterns and practices in the Stonehenge landscape. In 2013 he was elected a Fellow of the Society of the Antiquaries (FSA) in recognition of the importance of these discoveries.

In 2010 David Jacques won an Open University Teaching Prize for his work at Vespasian's Camp and the ways he involved that with his students learning. His project at Stonehenge was nominated 'Research Project of the Year 2013' by Current Archaeology Magazine, and was runner-up to Leicester University's discovery of Richard III. Under David Jacques's direction, the team's work has also featured on BBC 4's 'Flying Archaeologist' series, regional BBC and ITV output, and has been extensively reported in the press.

As a Fulbright alumnus, David Jacques has worked extensively to improve the education system of the Republic of Georgia, setting up and running a charity which stimulated an investment of \$12 million into the Georgian education system between 2005-08. In 2011, he was chosen as one of two 'Outstanding' British Fulbright Teacher Program alumni of the past 60 years.

Summary of content

The course will also examine the early Neolithic monumentalisation of key areas around the British Isles, as above. It will discuss the 'big questions' about the iconic stone circles, their landscapes and their backstories: Why are they where they are? What were they for? Where did the people come from who first used the landscapes and who later built and used them?

Aims

This course aims to:

- offer a broadly chronological survey of Stonehenge and other major Neolithic and early Bronze age stone circles
- enable students to place their own research interests within the broader context of developments in human society/culture in the Neolithic and early Bronze Age
- gain understanding of the new discoveries relating to these sites, and how these discoveries affect our understanding of the Neolithic and Bronze Age monumentalising of their landscapes

Course sessions

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Ways of understanding stone circles and their landscape: why are they here? What are they for?
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	New discoveries: the Ness of Brodgar, Orkney
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	New discoveries: Stonehenge
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	New discoveries: Callanish, Outer Hebrides
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Artefact handling
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	New discoveries: the Mull Circle (Isle of Man), Knowth (Ireland) and Castlerigg (Cumbria)
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Overview – Neolithic and early Bronze Age stone circles
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Presentation of the course

Class discussion (very important!), practical work, problem solving exercises, lecture and seminar formats (involving power points).

Learning outcomes

As a result of the course, you will gain a greater understanding of the subject and you should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding how the movement of people and ideas in the above areas contributed to the establishment of their later renowned ceremonial character
- understand how certain landscape contexts contributed to the selection of long term 'special' places that led to the establishment and adaption of stone circle monuments
- appreciate the importance of multi proxy dating, pollen and animal DNA evidence and other artefactual evidence for understanding what went on in such monuments: what was different about them and what were potential common denominators in their design, use and symbolism

Reading and resources list

There are no compulsory readings for this course.

However, you may find the below recommended reading list of interest to supplement your course.

Bowden, M & Souter, *The Stonehenge Landscape*, (English Heritage, 2015)

Jacques, D et al, *Blick Mead: Examining the First Place in the Stonehenge Landscape*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2018)

Jacques, D & Davis G, *Stonehenge A Landscape Through Time*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019)

Miles, D, *The Tale of the Axe – How the Neolithic Revolution Started*, (Thames and Hudson, 2021)

Parker Pearson, P, *Stonehenge – Stonehenge: Making Sense of a Prehistoric Monument*, (CBA, 2015)

Pryor, F, *Scenes From Prehistoric Life (Scenes 1-7)*, (Head Zeus, 2021)

Wickham-Jones, C, *Between the Wind and the Water: World Heritage Orkney*, (Windgather Press, 2015)

Online resources:

Articles

[Current Archaeology on Blick Mead and Stonehenge Landscape across time \(2022\)](#)

Interviews:

[Dog tooth found near Stonehenge 'evidence of earliest journey'](#)

[Stone Age dog on 250 mile walk](#)

[Dog tooth reveals earliest journey](#)

Note: Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) students are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current ICE course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

(Information correct as of April 2024)