
Weekend Courses 2024-25

In search of venerated landscapes: hunters and farmers from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age

Start date: 11 July 2025

End date: 13 July 2025

Venue: Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor: Professor David Jacques

Course Code: 2425NRX053

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 was nominated 'Research Project of the Year 2013' by *Current Archaeology Magazine*, and was runner-up to Leicester University's discovery of Richard III. In 2018 the Blick Mead Project won *Current Archaeology's* 'Research Project of the Year' award, and in 2023 David was awarded 'Archaeologist of the Year' by the same magazine. Under David Jacques's direction, the team's work has also featured on BBC, Channel 4 and National Geographic documentaries, and has been extensively reported in elsewhere in the media.

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 examine key landscapes around the British Isles and in France. It will discuss the 'big questions' about what significance these landscapes might have had for the generations of hunters and farmers who built and used them.

Aims

This course aims to:

- offer a broadly chronological survey of landscapes venerated by hunters and farmers from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze age
- enable students to place their own research interests within the broader context of developments in human society/culture from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age
- gain understanding of the new discoveries relating to these sites, and how these discoveries affect our understanding of the ceremonial significance of these 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	Introductions - understanding venerated landscapes from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age: why are they there? What are they for?
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	'Reading' the Upper Palaeolithic cave site of Lascaux, France
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Where the wild ones were: (1) ritual at the Mesolithic site at Star Carr, North Yorkshire (2) Blick Mead - new discoveries and interpretations
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	The Neolithic ceremonial complex of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Artefact handling - Mesolithic and Neolithic finds from the Stonehenge World Heritage Site
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	The Neolithic ceremonial complex sites at the Ness of Brodgar, Orkney
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Overview - development of ritual landscapes c.14000 BC-2500BC
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, animals 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 ceremonial and ritualistic sites
- 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 is no required reading for this course.

You may find the recommended reading list provided below 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 – A Brief History* (Bloomsbury 2023)

Pryor, F, *Scenes From Prehistoric Life (Scenes 3 and 4)* (Head Zeus 2021)

Ruggles, C, *Stonehenge – Sighting the Sun* (Historic England 2024) * Please note this book, by an archaeoastronomer, is not just about Stonehenge

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

Williams, D, *The Mind In The-Cave* (Thames and Hudson 2004)

Online resources:

Articles:

Blick Mead/Stonehenge - <https://the-past.com/news/new-analysis-of-blick-meads-mesolithic-landscape>

Ness Of Brodgar Project website - <https://www.nessofbrodgar.co.uk/>

Upper Palaeolithic cave art - <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/apr/23/cave-paintings-art-lockdown-obsession-30-000-years-lascaux>

Star Carr - <https://maa.cam.ac.uk/survival-story-prehistoric-life-star-carr>

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)