Megaliths and Giants: Why did prehistoric people build big monuments?

Start date 17 June 2018  Time 10:00 – 16:45

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Dr Isabelle Vella Gregory  Course code 1718NDX057

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings

For further information on this course, please contact Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237

To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Isabelle Vella Gregory is an archaeologist, formerly a Junior Research Fellow at Christ's College and now an affiliate scholar at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Born in Malta, where she first studied archaeology, she moved to Cambridge to pursue her Master's and doctoral studies. She teaches undergraduates at the University of Cambridge, focusing on prehistory, methodology and an inter-disciplinary approach to archaeology. Her expertise lies in central Mediterranean prehistory, from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age, and archaeological method and theory. Isabelle has conducted fieldwork in Malta and Italy and museum studies in Sardinia.

Isabelle's teaching style is aimed at enabling participants to develop their critical thinking skills and encouraging group discussion. She finds that heavy use of mixed media, particularly vision and sound, stimulates thought and discourse and enables participants to really take a close look at the many fascinating things under discussion. Her approach is very much multi-disciplinary- after all an understanding of humanity requires many tools and approaches. Interacting with adult students is, for Isabelle, always a pleasure- participants bring with them a wealth of experience and perspectives and they are always willing to engage in lively debate.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:15</td>
<td>The lure of big stones</td>
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<td>11:15</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
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<td>11:45 – 13:00</td>
<td>Megaliths in Europe</td>
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<td>13:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14:00 – 15:15</td>
<td>Megaliths in the Mediterranean and beyond</td>
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<td>15:15</td>
<td>Tea</td>
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<td>15:30 – 16:45</td>
<td>So why did people build big stone monuments?</td>
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<td>16:45</td>
<td>Day-school ends</td>
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Course syllabus

Lecture 1: The lure of big stones: Megaliths have fascinated antiquarians, archaeologists and many other people. They play a key role in the development of archaeology (perhaps link people to my Thunderstones course?). This session explores the history of interest in megaliths, the many legends and the ever-present giants.

Lecture 2: Megaliths in Europe. While big stones are something these buildings have in common, there is huge variation in megalithic buildings across time and space. This session will examine some of the key monuments in Europe.

Lecture 3: Megaliths in the Mediterranean and beyond: Continuing our journey across megalithic sites, this lecture explores some of the key monuments in the Mediterranean and beyond. At this point, participants are invited to debate what constitutes a megalithic site.

Lecture 4: So why do people build big stone monuments? The quest for understanding megaliths continues today. This session will involve active debate and short exercises, inviting participants to apply their skills. It will also explore the modern significance of megaliths to many groups, for example pagans. The sharing of personal experiences in this regard is most welcome.

Aims:

1. Develop a good understanding and knowledge of key megalithic sites through the lectures which is tested during the discussion sessions
2. Enhance analytical and critical thinking skills through the group and individual exercises under the guidance of the lecturer
3. Increased appreciation of, and engagement with, the many ways in which humans have created their worlds.

Content:

Throughout Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia and Africa there are numerous large megalithic buildings, generally described as monuments. There are many myths about their origins, including a ‘race of Giants’. The immense stones have both revealed and obscured details about prehistoric life. As we explore key sites, we will discover how they cannot be understood on their own and why there is no single explanation. Indeed, while all these buildings are built of large stones they were created by very different people and for very different reasons.

Does size matter? Is monumentality an indicator of greatness? Do big stones obscure our view of people? These questions will be discussed and debated throughout the course.

Presentation of the course:

Illustrated lectures, class discussion, short tasks

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- To identify and understand major megalithic sites
- To apply analytical skills regarding these sites, particularly since they often feature in popular media
- To pursue further independent study using the tools acquired in this course.
Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *


Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education 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 Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 19 January 2018