

Les Varines, Jersey



Les Varines is a Magdalenian (c.12, 500 BP) open air site on the Channel Island of Jersey, close to France. Backed up against a low cliff, it overlooks a dry valley leading out into what would once have been the open, dry plain of the Channel River Valley, and probably represents some sort of hunting camp or more long-lived settlement. The site is extremely rich in flint finds, requiring meticulous hand excavation, planning and recording.

Students will be trained in methods appropriate to dealing with such fine-grained Prehistoric archaeology, including 3D plotting using a total station, drawing, the maintenance of careful context records, recording artefact dip and orientation in the field, together with wet and dry sieving. Most excavation will be undertaken through trowelling within metre squares, under cover. In addition, students will have the opportunity to participate in large scale geophysical survey and hand augering to characterise the immediate environs of the site, as well as prospection - (geological section logging and test pitting) at other Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites around the island.

The excavations at Les Varines form part of the third year of the Quaternary Archaeology and Environments of Jersey Project (QAEJ: <http://quaternaryjersey.wordpress.com/>), The broader QAEJ project involves staff and students from UCL, Manchester, the University of Wales, St. Andrews University, and the British Museum, and has involved offshore survey, and excavation within the Neanderthal site of La Cotte de St. Brelade. There will be opportunities to visit this site and others targeted in previous years. Emerging results/current research will be presented in evening lectures throughout the three weeks of fieldwork.



We will be camping at an Air Cadet Training Base, where showers and cooking facilities are available; everyone will help out with post-excavation tasks and general camp maintenance. Students are strongly encouraged to bring good quality tents in case of poor weather! The base is within walking distance of the beach at St.Ouen's Bay, and on the main bus route running from the airport to the island's capital, St. Helier. The working week will be Sunday – Friday; the excavation will run from 8th-28th July 2012.

