

## **The German Occupation**

On the 10 March 1942 the German forces started to build a battalion command bunker into the western side of the Neolithic mound and over the next few years a total of 70 trenches were dug in the grounds.

Archaeologically the damage was extensive.

The bunker is now a memorial dedicated to the suffering and courage of the thousands of men, women and children who were transported to the Channel Islands as forced workers during the Second World War. The memorial reflects on the circumstances surrounding this tragic episode of our history. It uses testimony and images to illustrate aspects such as where these people came from and the appalling conditions under which they were forced to work. Many of the workers are known to have died in the islands but for others the islands were just another stage in their journey towards death.

## **The Museum**

Jersey is an island rich in archaeological evidence created by generation upon generation of human activity. The archaeology gallery traces this fascinating story of Jersey's human past, beginning with the arrival of the first people a quarter of a million years ago. Using spectacular displays of artefacts and accounts of excavations the story concludes in 1500 with the fortification of the island, brought about by the constant threat of war and invasion.

## **Neolithic House**

In the meadow there is a reconstruction of a Neolithic house, which is used by island school children as part of their history lessons. They have been responsible for daubing the walls and organising the interior. At certain times of the year they come up to the site to cook over open fires, grind corn and try their hand at the bow drill.

Come and discover the crafts and skills of Neolithic people, during the school summer holidays, with hands-on activities including pottery, tool, jewellery and string making.

## **Archaeologists at Work**

Research is carried out at La Hougue Bie by members of the archaeology section of the Société Jersiaise. A major part of their work is devoted to discoveries from rescue excavation in the town of St Helier which started in 1971 and still continues today.

Geologically, Jersey is unique and in the geology gallery numerous specimens are used to illustrate this, starting with the oldest rocks in the island dating from about 900 million years ago and continuing through more recent geological time.

## **The passage grave**

La Hougue Bie is a Neolithic ritual site which was in use around 3500 BC. It is one of the largest and best preserved passage graves in Europe. Although it is generally referred to as a tomb, the monument would have served a much more complex purpose, with a number of ritual and ceremonial functions, of

which burial was only one.

The passage grave itself was discovered in 1924 during excavations by the Société Jersiaise. The structure consists of a narrow passage (9.6m long) leading into a large oval chamber (9m long x 3.6m wide) with two small side chambers projecting from the north and south walls. A raised platform leads to a small end chamber located at the western side of the main chamber, this area was probably the most sacred part of the monument. The large upright stones and capstones in the tomb itself come from various places in the east of the island and evidence suggests that some have been reused from earlier monuments. They were set into the ground using earth ramps, wooden rollers and a lot of manpower.

Considering the size and complex nature of the structure, finds were relatively few. Human bone fragments of at least eight individuals were discovered, as well as a number of artefacts including flint tools, beads, the bones of sheep, pig and ox and large quantities of limpet shells. Fragments of around twenty pottery vessels were found, many of which showed signs of burning and may have been used as lamps or for the ritual burning of incense.

Since the recent excavations and restoration of the original entrance of the passage we have made an exciting discovery. Observations from inside the tomb at sunrise on the spring and autumn equinox have revealed that the orientation of the passage allows the sun's rays to shine through to the chamber entering the back recess of the terminal cell.

The mound

The great mound which covers the passage grave was recently explored for the first time as part of a major excavation project. The project was carried out between 1991 and 1995 and led to the spectacular discovery of a massive stone structure lying beneath the grass covered mound. This discovery has enabled us to understand the structure and evolution of the whole monument.

The first phase of La Hougue Bie's development was the construction of the passage and chamber which were then covered by a well structured rubble cairn. This was at least 9m high, 36m in diameter and was faced with dry stone walling. This can be clearly seen around the entrance. During the Neolithic period when the monument was in use, a series of earth banks were built against the mound, again these were faced with dry stonework. The last and by far the largest of these banks can be seen as curving walls extending from either side of the tomb's entrance.

The passage grave of La Hougue Bie remained open and in use for several centuries. When the tomb was finally sealed, the passage was blocked by a dry stone wall and the entrance area was filled in and blocked by a mass of debris. The site appears to have been completely abandoned until the medieval period.

### **Chapels and pilgrims**

La Hougue Bie seems to have been recognised as a pagan site from early times and was christianised, as many sites are, by the building of an early

medieval chapel on its summit. The chapel of Notre Dame de la Clarté was built in the twelfth century, possibly replacing an older wooden structure. The chapel remained in use for about four centuries and then in 1520, the Jerusalem chapel and crypt were built by Richard Mabon, the Dean of Jersey. According to tradition Dean Mabon made money from pilgrims by staging fake miracles in the chapel and crypt! The two archangels painted on the ceiling were added shortly after the chapel was built.

The chapels were abandoned around the Protestant Reformation and later fell into ruin. They were extensively rebuilt in 1925 and reconsecrated in 1931. Today they are the setting for a number of services and an annual pilgrimage.

## **Towers**

### **Tour D'Auvergne/Prince's Tower**

La Hougue Bie was reoccupied in the eighteenth century when between 1792-93 the D'Auvergne family transformed the chapel ruins into an aristocratic home in the Neo-Gothic style, with a castellated wall and two impressive towers. Ivy was encouraged to grow on the tower to enhance the atmosphere of Gothic decrepitude. The interior of the chapels were extensively modified to produce a large hall with windows at both ends. The building was abandoned at the end of the eighteenth century and quickly fell into disrepair. It became known as the Prince's Tower because Philippe D'Auvergne was heir to the Prince de Bouillon.

A recently commissioned model forms the centrepiece of a new exhibition which brings alive this fascinating episode in the history of La Hougue Bie

### **Princes Tower Hotel**

The ruined towers of La Hougue Bie soon became an important landmark and tourist attraction. Visitors came for the panoramic view from the top of the mound, from which the coast of France and most of the island can be seen. This increased popularity led to more facilities being built and as a result the Princes Tower Hotel and bowling alley were constructed during the 1830s. In 1859 La Hougue Bie was described as 'the wonder of the island's wonders'. The hotel closed its doors in the early 1920s when the site was bought by the Société Jersiaise.