Jersey: Ice Age Island

Media Information

Ice Age Island project – background and funding

Jersey’s Ice Age Island project aims to discover more about Jersey’s rich Ice Age landscapes and histories through archaeological excavations and archive work.

The project could not have gone ahead without the assistance of Capco Trust as sponsors and the Jersey Tourism Development board, whose continued support and investment is much appreciated.

Jersey Heritage was awarded a grant for £199,000 from the Tourism Development Fund (TDF) in 2013 to finance the three year archaeological project, which has explored Jersey’s unique history stretching back over a quarter of a million years.

The grant funding has been entirely dedicated to support the continuing work of the Quaternary Archaeology and Environments of Jersey Project, an eminent team of UK archaeologists and academics who have been working in Jersey for a number of years. The project is of notable importance in putting Jersey firmly on the historical map globally and it has the potential for the Island to become one of the most significant cultural heritage destinations in Europe.

The grant has been used to enable the continuation of fieldwork and research that had already uncovered hunting sites and submerged Ice Age landscapes, ranging from the earliest occupation by Neanderthals over 250,000 years ago, to the arrival of the first modern humans. To date, there have already been significant finds, but it is anticipated that there is more evidence and artefacts of ancient human occupations still waiting to be discovered across Jersey.

2015 is the last of the three year funding by Tourism Development Fund for the Ice Age Island project. However, all being well that further funding is secured, the team hope to return next year to unearth further discoveries and to continue to generate international exposure for the Island.

The research has also received £170,000 of funding from the National Environmental Research Council and the Leverhulme-funded Ancient Human Occupation of Britain Project in the UK.
The team undertaking the study is led by Dr Matt Pope, Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, and colleagues from a number of UK institutions including the British Museum.

Jersey Heritage’s Ice Age Island project has enjoyed national media coverage, appearing in the BBC shows Ice Age Giants and Digging for Britain, Coast on BBC Two and also Open Country on Radio 4.

Jersey Heritage is facilitating the exploration and interpretation of this project, the results of which will have global resonance and are presented to the public in an exciting new exhibition which opens in October 2015. Jersey: Ice Age Island is based on a concept created by the Natural History Museum.

Jersey Heritage is also working with Jersey Tourism to transform the archaeological discoveries into a tourism and educational resource, including dedicated Ice Age Walking Trails around the Island, an Ice Age Walking Guide and virtual tours, which are available to view and download on the Jersey Heritage website www.jerseyheritage.org/IceAgeIsland.