Fieldwork in the vicinity of the megalithic tomb of Arthur’s Stone, overlooking the Golden Valley, took place in July 2021, co-directed by Professor Julian Thomas of Manchester University and Professor Keith Ray of Cardiff University (former County Archaeologist for Herefordshire). This work was an extension of the Beneath Hay Bluff Project, which has already undertaken nine seasons of excavation at Dorstone Hill nearby. Fieldwork in 2021 consisted of two elements: a grid of one-metre square test pits at five-metre intervals to identify concentrations of artefacts in the topsoil in the fields immediately to the south of the monument, and a trench 15 x 10 metres
in extent immediately to the south-east of the scheduled area surrounding the megalithic
chamber, beyond the footpath and field boundary. IFR students took part in

PART 2: REFLECTION ON TEACHING

2021 was an exceptionally challenging season, owing principally to the Covid 19 pandemic and
the administrative and regulatory burdens that it placed on us. We intended that this year the
project would be a low-stress initiative focused on teaching and skills, but in the event all three
of the sites that we were investigating produced spectacular and demanding archaeology.
Government limitations on the number of people who could travel in vehicles, and the different
regulations on either side of the nearby Welsh border meant that logistics were especially
complex, and moving students between campsite and fieldwork sites was difficult, as was any
form of field trip.

We also found that running three different sites under this regime was quite taxing. In order to
move students to site with low vehicle occupancy we had to stagger the start and finish times for
the three sites. This meant that our normal practice of having a team meeting each morning
became impossible, and consequently the communication of information amongst a large
project staff became very difficult.

Having said this, we feel that it was a highly successful season. Circulating the students between
the three sites meant that we could ensure that each person had a wide range of experiences. It
also meant that we could break down the Manchester, Cardiff and IFR cohorts of students, and
foster interaction. Having each student work for three different directors meant that we could
compare our experiences of their skills and aptitudes in different circumstances, which meant
that our evaluation of their work was more nuanced. While the options for large-scale fieldtrips
were curtailed by Covid, Prof. Ray’s initiative to take the IFR students for days out in small groups
proved highly successful. Finally, the assessed coursework submitted by the IFR students was
generally of very high standard, demonstrating that their immersion in British archaeology had
generated real enthusiasm and understanding on their part. On the whole, the very positive
student feedback forms reflect the experience that the students had in 2021 (and several of
them have already written to ask about returning in 2022). Where there were minor negative
comments, these generally reflect the difficulties of working under pandemic conditions.

In 2022, we anticipate that we will not be working around the strictures of lockdown and
quarantine. Therefore it will be possible to reinstate the lab-based element of the course that
was lost to the ten-day isolation period, and with it some trips and visits in the Manchester area
that will complement the rural landscape of Herefordshire. In the 2022 season we will be
restricting our work to two sites: Arthur’s Stone and Snodhill Castle. This will provide the same
diversity of prehistoric and historic archaeology without the logistic issues of this summer.
Working to a more consolidated timetable will enhance communication within the project.
Finally, we have learned that the US students will appreciate more supermarket and launderette
trips, which will be much easier to achieve in the absence of travel restrictions.