



BENEATH HAY BLUFF, UNITED KINGDOM

Course ID: ARCH 365BG

June 27th to July 27th 2023

Academic Credits: 8 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 12 Quarter Units)

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR(S)

Prof. Julian Thomas, Department of Classics, Ancient History, Archaeology and Egyptology, University of Manchester (Julian.Thomas@manchester.ac.uk)

Prof. Keith Ray, School of History, Archaeology and Religion, University of Cardiff (rayk1@cardiff.ac.uk)



OVERVIEW

Since 2010, the Beneath Hay Bluff Project has been investigating the character of prehistoric, and specifically Neolithic activity in southwest Herefordshire, or the border between modern England and Wales. This region has been somewhat neglected by prehistoric archaeology, in part owing to a lack of antiquarian investigations, but it is increasingly clear that it is distinguished by a rich and under-exploited prehistoric record. In seeking to address questions of monumentality, memory, place and material traditions, we have excavated at a number of sites, including the funerary round cairn at Olchon Court and the long mounds, buildings and causewayed enclosure of Dorstone Hill. The region is a rural one, with picturesque villages, castles, abbeys, rolling hills and lush river valleys: it is at once typically 'English' and bordering on rugged Welsh uplands. The field school provides a unique learning experience by drawing on the resources of both the University of Manchester and Herefordshire Archaeology, who contribute facilities, equipment and staff. All of our supervisory staff are professionals from the world of commercial archaeology, who bring a wealth of experience and know-how.

In detailing the character of Neolithic southwest Herefordshire, the following themes are of central importance to us:

- The chronology of the introduction and transformation of Neolithic innovations in Britain;
- The creation and maintenance of significant places: 'narratives of place';
- The development of monumental landscapes;
- The use of exotic materials (notably rock crystal) and the establishment of inter-regional contacts;
- The formation and maintenance of regional identities in prehistory;
- The place of prehistoric monuments in modern societies.

The Beneath Hay Bluff Project is now entering into a mature phase of investigation, which is seeking to broaden our work in southwest Herefordshire, and to characterise Neolithic activity across a broader timescale. Having identified a site of national importance at Dorstone Hill, we are now seeking to place this monumental complex into a wider context, by addressing a series of new sites, and seeking to engage our local community to a greater extent. While completing work at Dorstone Hill, we will be expanding our scope to investigate a number of other sites. These include the major megalithic tomb of Arthur's Stone.

Arthur's Stone is a Neolithic chambered tomb in southwest Herefordshire, dating to the period around 3600 BC, located on a hilltop between the valleys of the rivers Wye and Dore. Arthur's Stone is a scheduled monument in the care of English Heritage, and it has long fascinated both archaeologists and local people, but it remains poorly understood. It consists of a long cairn of small stones, within which is set a chamber composed of a massive capstone set on top of a series of uprights. The capstone is broken, and this may have happened during the construction of the monument, and dramatic aspect of the site provided the inspiration for the Stone Table in C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*.

In 2021, an area was excavated immediately in front of the tomb, where pits or hearths might have been expected, but to our astonishment it was discovered that an earlier phase of the mound, composed of earth and timber, extended some distance beyond the known structure. Moreover, two lines of postholes were discovered, forming an avenue of upright timbers leading toward the monument from the Golden Valley. In 2022, further excavations demonstrated that the timber avenue had been replaced in stone, creating an imposing processional way leading toward the tomb. The 2022 season also

revealed the beautifully constructed drystone wall that surrounds the stone cairn, and provided indications that the massive chamber had existed as a freestanding entity before the cairn had been constructed around it.

Our investigations are demonstrating that Arthur's Stone had a long a complex history of construction and use, in which its outward appearance was repeatedly reconfigured. Investigations will continue in the coming season, in which further work will be undertaken on the monument itself, while new trenches will be opened in the fields to the north of the monument. These will address the extension of the long cairn north of the modern roadway, a possible quarry site, and a potential second mound discovered by remote sensing in 2022.

In addition, excavations will continue at 11th century AD Snodhill Castle (near Dorstone), which is presently being prepared to opening to the public. This will foster skills in the excavation and recording of stone buildings, and it is anticipated that significant quantities of small finds (principally Medieval pottery) will be encountered. Students will circulate between these two excavations, acquiring quite different fieldwork skills in the process.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see assessment, below). This field school provides a minimum of 360 hours of experiential education. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institution prior to attending this field school.

Transcripts: An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One more transcript may be sent to the student's home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

PREREQUISITES

There are no specific prerequisites for this field school, and no particular prior experience is expected. We concur with the IFR's view that any student should be able to attend field schools, but that students should be aware that field schools are serious research activities involving physical labor and work in the outdoors.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to student safety.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We encourage students to explore such insurance on their own as it may be purchased at affordable prices. [Insuremytrip.com](https://www.insuremytrip.com) or [Travelguard.com](https://www.travelguard.com) are possible sites where field school participants may explore travel cancellation insurance quotes and policies. If you do purchase such insurance, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by any number of unforeseen circumstances, including revised decisions by local permitting agencies, political unrest, and changes in the weather. While this schedule represents the best of the director(s) intentions, we—students and staff alike—need to be adaptable and tolerant of necessary alterations. This adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research.

Herefordshire is an extremely low-risk fieldwork destination. The threats of crime and violence are absolutely negligible, although the usual precautions should be taken to secure valuables against petty theft. The climate is mild, but we encourage students to dress for both warm sunshine and occasional rain. You should also pay some consideration in advance to the practicalities of living in a tent for four weeks. Our work is subject to rigorous risk assessment overseen by both the University of Manchester and Herefordshire Council, and we tend to err on the side of caution where student safety is concerned. You will receive a site induction on issues ranging from the safe use of tools, to campsite decorum, appropriate clothing (hats and stout footwear), and respectful conduct in relation to peers and the local community. We ask that you abide by our simple rules.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This field course aims to introduce students to the archaeology of Herefordshire and the borderland between England and Wales, to a series of current issues in the archaeology of Neolithic Britain, and to the techniques and methodologies employed in the study of prehistory in Britain, and in the investigation of medieval architecture. As a subsidiary issue, students will be introduced to the landscapes and archaeology of a picturesque rural area. Learning will therefore take a series of different forms: readings provided before the start of the field school; excavation and survey experience in the field; lectures; informal teaching sessions in the field; trips to sites, monuments and museums. In the field, students can expect to take part in stratigraphic excavation, to record contexts and finds, to make use of both total station and GPS survey equipment, and to draw plans and sections. Student progress in the acquisition of skills in the field will be monitored through the use of a personal Archaeological Skills Passport.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the field school, students should:

- Have acquired a broad familiarity with the archaeology and landscapes of the southern borderland between England and Wales, from prehistory to the Medieval period;
- Be familiar with some of the key issues in the archaeology of Prehistoric Britain;
- Be familiar with the main excavation, survey and recording methodologies employed in British prehistoric archaeology;
- Have acquired a basic level of competence in a variety of archaeological field skills (including, for example: troweling, mattocking, shoveling, barrowing, test-pit excavation, feature excavation, section drawing, planning, total station survey, GPS survey, laying out a grid, soil sieving, feature photography, context recording, finds recording), and should understand their appropriate use;
- Have been introduced to a further series of methodologies conducted by specialist staff in the field (such as drone photography and photogrammetry, environmental sampling, geophysical survey, etc.);

ASSESSMENT

- 40% Active fieldwork participation
- 60% Assessed fieldwork report

TRAVEL, ROOM & BOARD, & SAFETY LOGISTICS

COVID-19 Disclaimer:

The logistics outlined below for this IFR field school were written according to the most current and accurate information available to IFR. We recognize that the best practices for preventing the transmission of the coronavirus may change in the coming months. The IFR will be revisiting program-specific plans periodically throughout the enrollment period and will update program details according to new developments, new travel protocols, and updates to local policies. Updates to program-specific protocols will be communicated to participants at the pre-program orientation.

An IFR field school is designed to provide safe, positive, and constructive experiences for participating communities, students, and researchers. We are committed to protocols and practices that support the health and well-being of all involved in our field school projects, including the members of the community in which these projects take place. The IFR COVID-19 Policies have been developed with Dr. Kurt Eifling, the IFR Medical Director. Dr Eifling is a Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine and a practicing physician (<https://ifrglobal.org/about/staff/>).

We strongly recommend reviewing IFR's COVID-19 policies before enrolling in a program. All IFR students sign an agreement (Student COVID-19 Prevention Agreement) to uphold and abide by all aspects of the IFR COVID-19 policy as published on the website (<https://ifrglobal.org/ifr-covid-19-practices/>) as well as any program-specific protocols. These practices are subject to change as health and risk management experts provide new recommendations and best practices.

PRIOR TO TRAVEL

IFR requires all students participating in IFR programs to be “up to date” with their COVID-19 vaccines, meaning they have completed a COVID-19 vaccine primary series AND received the most recent booster dose recommended by CDC, if eligible. For recommendations and eligibility for booster shots according to age and health status, please consult the [CDC website](#).

VISA REQUIREMENTS

To enter the United Kingdom, all U.S. citizens who do not also hold UK citizenship must present a valid U.S. passport to enter and depart. Your passport must be valid for the entire duration of your planned stay. U.S. and Canadian citizens can stay in the UK for up to 6 months, but check this frequently because regulations change, often with little notice.

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

Due to ongoing uncertainties regarding the travel regulations related to COVID-19, IFR will assess the local conditions closer to the travel date (5–6 weeks prior to the program beginning) and will make Go/No Go decisions then. You are required to participate in the mandatory orientation meeting when we will discuss the latest travel information and regulations. We also suggest you consider postponing the purchase of your airline ticket until *after* the program orientation.

We will be meeting all participating students at Manchester Airport, and conveying them from there directly to the field camp in Dorstone village by minibus, roughly a three-hour drive. You should time your flight to arrive before 2:00 pm local time on 27th June. If you wish to make other arrangements (for instance, arriving early in the UK), we can arrange to meet you at Hereford railway station. In the very unlikely eventuality that you should be held at the airport for health reasons, you should contact us directly on a cell phone number that will be provided.

The threat of Covid-19 has receded very considerably in the UK. 93.6% of the population have now received at least one shot of vaccine, and there are now no coronavirus restrictions in the country. However, should any project participant develop coronavirus symptoms they would be quarantined, and the entire project would be tested. You can find details here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Both excavation sites are very close to the camp site. While either could be walked in under half an hour, we will convey all personnel to site by minibus each day.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email the field school director immediately. A local emergency mobile phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

LOCAL PROTOCOLS, REGULATIONS, & EXPECTATIONS

The UK has been out of lockdown since December 2021, and while there is still some cautious mask-wearing and hand-washing, there are now no coronavirus restrictions in the country.

The combination of extensive vaccination and widespread infection during the pandemic is that levels of immunity are now extremely high. You will not notice any reluctance on the part of the local population to interact with excavation personnel for reasons related to Covid.

Should there be a resurgence of Covid infections nationally (should a new variant emerge, for instance), we will reintroduce the stringent isolation and control measures that successfully prevented any infections on the project in 2021.

Our field school is conducted in close cooperation with Herefordshire County Council Planning Department. Should the pandemic return at the time of fieldwork, we will abide by the Council's workplace protocols, which can be found in their [outbreak control plan](#).

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our campsite is the cricket field in Dorstone village, which we have exclusive use of during the fieldwork period. There is a pavilion with showers and toilets, and another building used as a kitchen. During the fieldwork period we also have a large marquee for dining and social space, and at the bottom of the field, beside the stream, there is a space for a campfire. We will request students to each occupy a separate tent, and to pitch their tents at least two metres apart (for reasons of fire safety). Our usual cleaning and sanitation arrangements have been expanded to ensure the cleaning and disinfection of all high-touch surfaces. We have a full refuse disposal and recycling system which will dispose of all potentially contaminated materials. Launderettes are found in Hereford and Hay-on-Wye, and washing can be collected and sent in for a service wash during the week. You can also hand-wash clothes at the campsite.

Individual tents and sleeping mats will be provided for all IFR participants, but you will need to bring a sleeping bag.

Dorstone is a beautiful, traditional English village, with a fine pub (the Pandy Inn) that dates back to medieval times. Six miles away, across the Welsh border, is the small town of Hay on Wye, known for its castle and its many bookshops, and home to an annual literary festival (it styles itself 'Wales' booktown': <https://www.hay-on-wye.co.uk/>). Hereford is about sixteen miles distant, and the cathedral there holds the famous Mappa Mundi (a medieval map of the world) and a medieval chained library.

During fieldwork, our food is prepared by a cook employed by the project. There is a hot meal each evening, a variety of breakfast options, and a choice of sandwiches delivered to the site at lunchtime. We are happy to accommodate vegetarians, vegans, gluten-free, food allergies and intolerances, halal, kosher and other diets. One of the tasks of the day's kitchen staff will be the rigorous cleaning of all food handling and preparation spaces.

All participants in a field school, students and staff, will wear masks while indoors (i.e. during lectures, during labs, in shared residential spaces, etc.).

Regular hand washing will be a part of the project's daily schedule.

MANAGING COVID-19 CASES & OUTBREAKS

Numbers of Covid infections in the UK have been consistently in decline since July 2022, and did not pick up appreciably during the winter. In the absence of the emergence of an aggressive new variant, we do not anticipate further significant outbreaks. We assume that all project participants will be fully vaccinated, but we would be able to manage isolated COVID-19 cases. We would set up an isolation tent at a remove from the rest of the encampment, with separate toilet facilities. The nearest intensive care unit is in Hereford, a 30-minute drive away. If a student needed to be taken to this facility, an emergency ambulance would be summoned. In previous seasons we have been able to call on local paramedic teams in the event of medical emergencies (sunstroke, burns, etc.). We have close contacts with the local community, through the village hall committee, the parish council, the local history group and Dorstone’s Front Room, which enable us to communicate effectively with local stakeholders. Should a student exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, a member of staff who had been vaccinated would take responsibility for processing their laundry.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- 4- or 5-inch mason’s drop-forged (*not* riveted) pointing trowel
- Waterproofs, *including* waterproof trousers
- Sun hat
- Sturdy footwear – boots, *not* trainers, ideally with steel toecaps
- Sleeping bag
- Mask
- Hand sanitizer
- Steel tape measure (3-meter; metric)
- Plate, bowl and mug
- Knife, fork and spoon
- Torch / Flashlight
- Personal medical supplies and medications
- Sunscreen
- Hard-bound notebook (recommended)
- Folding camp chair (recommended)

COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field school begins with safety orientation. This orientation addresses local and program protocols concerning student behavior, appropriate attire, local practices and sensibilities that may be unfamiliar, potential fauna and flora hazards, IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and the student Code of Conduct.

Tuesday 27 th June	Travel	Arrive Dorstone c. 5:00 pm; campsite induction
Wednesday 28 th June	Digging	Evening lecture: Introducing Arthur’s Stone – Julian Thomas
Thursday 29 th June	Digging	
Friday 30 th June	Digging	
Saturday 1 st July	Day off	Visit: Hay-on-Wye and Longtown
Sunday 2 nd July	Digging	
Monday 3 rd July	Digging	

Tuesday 4 th July	Digging	
Wednesday 5 th July	Digging	Evening lecture: Nick Overton
Thursday 6 th July	Digging	
Friday 7 th July	Digging	
Saturday 8 th July	Day off	Visit: Gospel Pass and Llantony Abbey
Sunday 9 th July	Digging	
Monday 10 th July	Digging	
Tuesday 11 th July	Digging	
Wednesday 12 th July	Digging	Evening lecture: Keith Ray
Thursday 13 th July	Digging	
Friday 14 th July	Digging	
Saturday 15 th July	Day off	Visit: Ludlow and Stokesay Castle
Sunday 16 th July	Digging	
Monday 17 th July	Digging	
Tuesday 18 th July	Digging	
Wednesday 19 th July	Digging	Evening lecture: Tudur Davies
Thursday 20 th July	Digging	
Friday 21 th July	Digging	
Saturday 22 th July	Day off	Visit: Black Mountains tombs
Sunday 23 th July	Digging	
Monday 24 th July	Digging	
Tuesday 25 th July	Digging	
Wednesday 26 th July	Digging	Evening lecture: This year's discoveries – Julian Thomas
Thursday 27 th July	Travel	Return to Manchester Airport

Also (dates to be finalized): two excursions into local landscapes with Prof. Keith Ray (exclusive to IFR students); weekly flint knapping workshops with John Piprani; onsite seminars on the recording system.

REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder. Students are encouraged to download and/or print readings prior to traveling. Course participants are expected to be prepared to engage the discussions led by facilitators, all of whom will be looking for compelling evidence that students have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the scheduled day on which they are first discussed.

Cummings, V. 2012. What lies beneath: thinking about the qualities and essences of stone and wood in the chambered tomb architecture of Neolithic Britain and Ireland. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 12, 29-50.

Cummings, V., Jones, A. and Watson, A. 2002. In between places: axial asymmetry and divided space in the monuments of the Black Mountains, south-east Wales. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 12, 57–70.

Garwood, P. 2007. Regions, cultural identity and social change, c. 4500-1500 BC: the West Midlands in context. In: P. Garwood (ed.) *The Undiscovered Country: The Earlier Prehistory of the West Midlands*, 194-215. Oxford: Oxbow.

- Lucas, G. 2001. *Critical Approaches to Fieldwork: Contemporary and Historical Approaches*. London: Routledge. [Chapter 5: Eventful Contexts, pp. 146-99.]
- Lucas, G. 2012. *Understanding the Archaeological Record*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chapter 6: Archaeological Interventions, pp. 215-57.
- Myers, A. 2007. The Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic archaeology of the West Midlands. In: P. Garwood (ed.) *The Undiscovered Country: The Earlier Prehistory of the West Midlands*, 23-38. Oxford: Oxbow.
- Ray, K. and Thomas, J. 2018. *Neolithic Britain: The Transformation of Social Worlds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chapter 1: Writing Neolithic Britain, pp. 15-48.
 - Chapter 2: 4000 BCE: a Cultural Threshold, pp. 49-96.
 - Chapter 3: Narratives for the Fourth Millennium, pp. 97-166.
- Ray, K. 2015. *The Archaeology of Herefordshire: An Exploration*. Eardisley: Logaston Press.
- Selected sections will be supplied.
- Whittle, A., Barclay, A., Bayliss, A., McFadyen, L., Schulting, R. and Wysocki, M. 2007. Building for the dead: events, processes and changing worldviews from the thirty-eighth to the thirty-fourth centuries Cal. BC in southern Britain. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 17 (supp.), 123-47.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Bradley, R. 2007. *The Prehistory of Britain and Ireland*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Cummings, V. 2018. *The Neolithic of Britain and Ireland*. London: Routledge.
- Harris, O. and Cipolla, C.N. 2017. *Archaeological Theory in the New Millennium*. London: Routledge.