



# NEOLITHIC MONUMENTALITY, MEMORY, PLACE & MATERIAL TRADITIONS: THE BENEATH HAY BLUFF PROJECT, UK

*Course ID: TBA*

*July 5 -August 8, 2020*

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

*School of Record: Connecticut College*

## FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

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## INTRODUCTION

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. Many of our supervisory staff are professionals from the world of commercial archaeology, who bring a wealth of experience and know-how. As well as undertaking four weeks in the field, practicing excavation, recording and survey, students spend a week in the very different urban environment of Manchester, taking part in post-excavation tasks in the laboratory.

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 will seek 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 will now seek 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 will include a possible henge monument at Clifford, and the major megalithic tomb of Arthur’s Stone. This latter will involve an appreciable realignment of our strategy.

While the Dorstone complex was unknown before our investigations, Arthur’s Stone is a well-known landmark, and a significant marker of local identity. Yet despite this, the monument has been disfigured by antiquarian activity, road-building, and stone robbing. As a result, it is poorly understood, and both its affinities and date are a mystery. Major investigation would involve total stripping and redisplay, in a way that must be sensitive to local sensibilities. Such a project could only be achieved in collaboration with the local community, in a way that builds on the relationships that we have been fostering over the past eight years. In 2020, investigations at Arthur’s Stone will commence with shovel-testing of gridded areas identified by geophysical survey in the immediate vicinity of the monument, and small-scale exploratory excavations on the monument itself.

#### **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 private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 160 direct instructional hours. 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 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 prerequisites for this field school. We assume no prior knowledge or skills on the part of the student, although it is possible to tailor the field experience to the requirements of more experienced students.

### DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involves risk. Students interested in participating in any IFR program must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we take risk seriously. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including student safety.

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. Our work is subject to rigorous risk assessment overseen by both the University of Manchester and Herefordshire County 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.

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](http://insuremytrip.com) or [Travelgurad.com](http://Travelgurad.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. See this [Wall Street Journal article about travel insurance](#) that may help you with to help to decide whether to purchase such insurance.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.

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

## 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, both in the field and in the laboratory. As a subsidiary issue, students will be introduced to the contrast between the landscapes and archaeology of a picturesque rural area and a densely populated modern city (Manchester, the world's first industrial city). 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; post-excavation experience in the laboratory; trips to sites, monuments and museums, both in Herefordshire and Manchester. In the field, students can expect to take part in both shovel-test and 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 and the laboratory 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;
- Be familiar with some of the key issues in the archaeology of Neolithic 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: trowelling, 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.);
- Have acquired a basic level of competence in a variety of post-excavation skills conducted in a laboratory environment (including, for example: wet sieving and flotation; archive digitization, digitization of field drawings, finds processing).

## **GRADING MATRIX**

**40% Active fieldwork participation**

**60% Assessed fieldwork report**

## **TRAVEL & MEETING POINT**

We suggest you hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancellation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. Such time frame still allows the purchase deeply discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss if airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

All students should arrange to arrive at Manchester International Airport (MAN) before 3:00 pm on Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup>, and to leave from the same airport on Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>. We will meet you at the airport, and drive by minibus direct to the project campsite in Dorstone village. This will be roughly a three-hour drive. You will be provided in advance with a cellphone number for your minibus driver, and details of a meeting point within the airport. On the day of departure, you will be going to the airport from student accommodation in Manchester.

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

## **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.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Our campsite is the cricket field in Dorstone village, which we have exclusive use of during the fieldwork period. Participants camp in individual tents. 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.

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. Hereford is about sixteen miles distant, and the cathedral there holds the famous Mappa Mundi 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, halal, kosher and other diets.

During the fifth week of the five-week course, students will be accommodated in university halls of residence in Manchester. This final week will give you the opportunity to visit museums and places of interest in the city, alongside working on post-excavation tasks in the Archaeology laboratories.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field school begins with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review IFR harassment and discrimination policies and review of the student Code of Conduct.

Sunday July 5th	Arrival: travel day Campsite induction
Monday July 6th	Site Induction Fieldwork
Tuesday July 7th	Fieldwork
Wednesday July 8th	Fieldwork Evening Lecture: Introducing the Beneath Hay Bluff Project – Julian Thomas
Thursday July 9 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork
Friday July 10 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork Evening Lecture: Archaeology of the southern Marches – Keith Ray
Saturday July 11 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture/Walk: the Dorstone area – Tim Hoverd
Sunday July 12 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork
Monday July 13 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork Evening Lecture: Mesolithic Britain – Nick Overton
Tuesday July 14 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork
Wednesday July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork Evening Lecture: Aspects of Arthur’s Stone – Keith Ray
Thursday July 16 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork
Friday July 17 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork Flint knapping workshop – John Piprani
Saturday July 18 <sup>th</sup>	Trip: the Black Mountains of Wales

Sunday July 19 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork
Monday July 20 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork Evening Lecture: Neolithic Britain I – Julian Thomas
Tuesday July 21 <sup>st</sup>	Fieldwork
Wednesday July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Fieldwork Evening Lecture: animal bones – Nick Overton
Thursday July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Fieldwork
Friday July 24 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork Flint knapping workshop – John Piprani
Saturday July 25 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture/Walk: the Olchon valley – Tim Hoverd
Sunday July 26 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork
Monday July 27 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork Evening Lecture: Neolithic Britain II – Julian Thomas
Tuesday July 28 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork
Wednesday July 29 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork Evening Lecture: Discoveries in 2020 – Julian Thomas
Thursday July 30 <sup>th</sup>	Fieldwork
Friday July 31 <sup>st</sup>	Fieldwork
Saturday August 1 <sup>st</sup>	Fieldwork
Sunday August 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Travel day > Manchester
Monday August 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Introduction to post-excavation workshop (J. Piprani & N. Overton)
Tuesday August 4 <sup>th</sup>	AM: post-excavation labs PM: visit Manchester Museum
Wednesday August 5 <sup>th</sup>	AM: post-excavation labs PM: Lecture: post-excavation analysis
Thursday August 6 <sup>th</sup>	AM: post-excavation labs PM: visit Science and Industry Museum
Friday August 7 <sup>th</sup>	Trip: Quarry Bank textile mill, Styall
Saturday August 8 <sup>th</sup>	Departure

#### 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
- Small tent
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping mat

#### REQUIRED READINGS

*PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder.*

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.

- 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.