

EARLY INHABITANTS OF BRITAIN

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PREHISTORY IN BRITAIN

Archaeologists and historians have divided Prehistory into three main phases which reflect **technological achievements**:

❖ **PALEOLITHIC** (Old Stone Age)- 500,000 years ago in Europe

❖ **MESOLITHIC** (Middle Stone Age)- 100,000 years ago the Neanderthal man appeared; 9,000 years ago after the retreat of glaciers new animals were hunted; around **5,000 BC** Britain was cut off from the mainland and became an island

❖ **NEOLITHIC** (New Stone Age)- around 3,500 BC



In **Britain's history** the period 8000BC – 43AD is referred to as **Prehistory**, as there are no written records covering these times. ...

The first people to arrive in **Britain** were hunter-gatherers who arrived from mainland Europe around 8,000 BC. They used weapons of crude stone and lived by hunting and fishing.

Like all other countries, England too had passed through the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Metal ages.

In each stages we can identify their progress....from crude aborgines of paleolithic period, man advanced significantly during the neolithic age. With better tools man was able to do agriculture, and that made them settle down in an area.

This was followed by the metal age.



Paleolithic

flint tools at **Norfolk**.is the earliest known evidence of *Homo antecessor* in Britain.

Remains of *Homo heidelbergensis* at **Sussex**. The earliest human remains found in Britain

Earliest evidence of **Neanderthals** in Britain was found at **Kent**

Mesolithic people used microlithic tools.

Cheddar Man, the oldest complete human skeleton in Britain

4000 BC marked the arrival of **the Beaker People** in Britain, replacing 90% of the earlier population. They used beaker shaped pots ,started agriculture and settled permanently in the south and the eastern coasts.

Neolithic

In this period arrived the Iberians. They were the dark haired people who came to England through the Iberian peninsula.

Stonehenge, a neolithic stone monument constructed from 3000 BC to 2000 BC. It consists of huge stones arranged in circular pattern vertically and huge stones placed horizontally over them.It had religious significance.It was believed to be associated with calendar. But archaeologists feel that they are burial monuments.



MIGRATION OF IBERIANS

Europe

- International Boundary
- Road
- River
- ★ National Capital
- City or Town

0 250 500 KM
0 250 500 Miles

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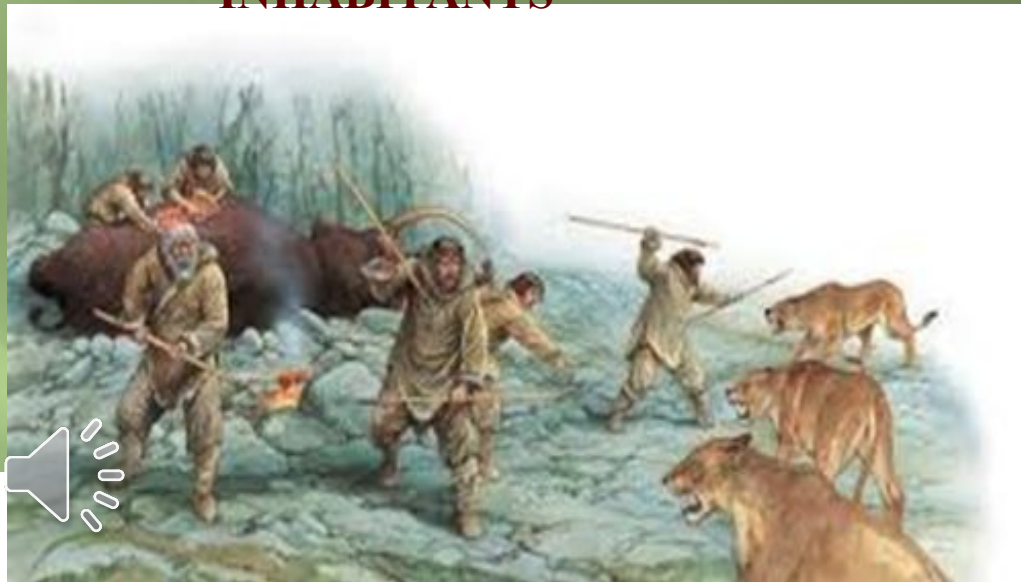
IBERIAN PENINSULA

AFRICA

STONEHENGES



EARLY INHABITANTS



STONE TOOLS



POTS USED BY THE BEAKER FOLK



After the stone ages came the metal ages.

Copper was the first metal to be discovered . Then they discovered bronze and later iron.

British Iron Age

Celts brought iron technology to Britain.



Celt, also spelled **Kelt**, are early Indo-European people who from the 2nd millennium BCE to the 1st century BCE spread over much of Europe. Their tribes and groups eventually ranged from the British Isles and many other parts of the world. One important Celtic tribe was the Brytons. It is after them that the country came to be known as Britain.

Linguistically they survive in the modern Celtic speakers of Ireland, Highland Scotland, Wales, and Brittany.

CELTIC ROUND HOUSES



HILL FORTS OF CELTS



Britain under cellts.

- In around 750 BC iron working techniques reached Britain from southern Europe. Iron was stronger and more plentiful than bronze, and its introduction marks the beginning of the Iron Age. Iron working revolutionised many aspects of life, most importantly agriculture. Iron tipped ploughs could turn soil more quickly and deeply than older wooden or bronze ones, and iron axes could clear forest land more efficiently for agriculture. There was a landscape of arable, pasture and managed woodland. There were many enclosed settlements and land ownership was important.
- Iron Age Britons lived in organised tribal groups, ruled by a chieftain. As people became more numerous, wars broke out between opposing tribes. This was traditionally interpreted as the reason for the building of hill forts, although the siting of some earthworks on the sides of hills undermined their defensive value, hence "hill forts" may represent increasing communal areas or even 'elite areas'. However some hillside constructions may simply have been cow enclosures.. There are over 2,000 Iron Age hillforts known in Britain. The Britons were renowned wheat farmers. Large farmsteads produced food in industrial quantities and Roman sources note that Britain exported hunting dogs, animal skins and slaves.



- It is generally thought that by 500 BC most people inhabiting the British Isles were speaking Common Brythonic language . Among these people were skilled craftsmen who had begun producing intricately patterned gold jewellery, in addition to tools and weapons of both bronze and iron.
- The Celts had migrated to England from north western Europe. They were fair and golden haired. They defeated the Iberians and occupied the southern and the eastern part of England.
- The religion of the celts was Druidism,It was a kind of primitive faith with nature worship and sacrifices.
- Their priest was called Druids. They excercised great influence in the society; were physicians who practiced herbal medicine. Magical feats and sacrifices were conducted by Druids.



- The Celts were defeated by the Romans. From 43 AD to 410 AD, England became a part of the Roman empire.
- Then came the AngloSaxons, Danes and the Normans.
- All these people mingled and mixed through centuries and thus rendered racial purity a myth.

