

PREHISTORY

Prehistory is a name we use to describe the period of time before people began to write. It's a long, long period - in Britain, we think it started about 900,000 years ago! This was when the earliest known humans came here. It lasted up until AD 43 when the Romans invaded!

Although there have been people in Britain on and off for hundreds of thousands of years, during Ice Ages it would have been too cold to live here. But since about 9500 BC, at the end of the last Ice Age, there have always been people living on this island.

And actually, at this time Britain wasn't even an island. It was joined to the rest of Europe by a place called Doggerland. In about 6,500 BC, Doggerland began to sink beneath the waves as glaciers melted and the sea level rose.

The first people who lived in Britain were hunter-gatherers. They didn't farm crops, and instead they killed wild animals and foraged plants. They were probably nomadic, meaning they moved about from place to place, rather than settling in one spot.

Farming was introduced to Britain in around 4000 BC. People began to grow crops like barley and wheat. They started to use flint, a kind of stone, to make tools and weapons. This is why we call this period the Stone Age! People also built monuments like stone circles, burial chambers, and mounds and circles made from earth.

The Bronze Age (2300 BC - 800 BC) began when metal weapons and jewellery arrived in Britain. Bronze Age people built round houses, often in villages. There was more competition for land to grow food, and people started to build hillforts.

In the Iron Age (800 BC - AD 50) people made tools and weapons out of - you guessed it - iron! There was a lot of innovation in this period. New tools and techniques made farming more productive, and the population grew to about one million people. More (and bigger) hillforts were built, and society began to be organised in tribes, which were probably led by a warrior elite.

In the later years of the Iron Age, people began to trade with the Romans. Julius Caesar raided Britain in 55-54 BC and wrote accounts of life in Britain, mentioning chariots and Druids. Thanks to troubles in other parts of the empire he didn't stay for long, but when the Romans came again 90 years later, they planned to conquer the whole island for good.

Now you know a bit more about prehistory, you can get cracking with your colouring-in!



PREHISTORIC ENGLAND

