

Prehistory



Image Resource



Museum
Gallery
Archive

The Box is Plymouth's new multi-million pound museum, gallery and archive. With brand new exhibition spaces alongside state-of-the-art facilities for research and learning, it's the perfect place to teach, inspire and engage students of all ages.

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About this resource

This resource explores The Box's collection of objects from prehistory. It provides images for use in the classroom.

Archaeologists and historians use the term 'prehistory' to refer to a time in a peoples' history before they used a written language.

In Britain we use the term prehistory to describe the period before we became part of the Roman Empire after the invasion of AD 43.

The prehistoric period in Britain lasted for hundreds of thousands of years, but Britain has only been permanently occupied by people for about 12,000 years. We often divide this long period up into shorter periods - a simplified version of these dates can be found on the prehistoric timeline on page 5.

The earliest humans living in Britain were hunter-gatherers. They survived by hunting wild animals and finding food to eat. Very gradually, people living in Britain learned new skills. They began to herd animals together and grow crops. Later they discovered how to use metals to make tools and other objects. These new innovations were brought to Britain by people from Europe.



Palaeolithic
c800,000 – 9,000 BC

Mesolithic
c9,000 – 4,000 BC

Neolithic
c4,000 – 2,300 BC

Bronze Age
Early – c2,300 – 1,500 BC
Middle – c1,500 – 1000 BC
Late – c1,000 – 750 BC

Iron Age
c750 BC – AD 43

Roman Britain
AD 43 – AD 410

Palaeolithic

Hyena jaw Kitley Caves

PLYMG.2015.1.3.70



Mesolithic

Boring/piercing tool

Chert, found at Hope Cove, Devon

2016.140.2



Neolithic

Polished axehead

Found during excavations for
Plymstock Broadway car park

AR.1986.620



Bronze Age

Arrowhead

Postbridge, 2500 - 1800 BC

AR.1923.109



Bronze Age

Elburton Urn

2050 - 1500 BC

E207.1/P1



Bronze Age

Bronze axehead

Mount Batten, Late Bronze Age

1955.4.2



Iron Age

Coin depicting Hercules (reverse) and tuna fish
From Spain, found at Brickfields, 100 - 0 BC

AR.81.92



Iron Age

Stone ring

Oreston

1960.13.4



Iron Age

Dobunni gold coin

10 BC - 10 AD

1925.64



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