Heritage & Archaeology

Discovering the River Tweed and its Tributaries

Contents

Heritage & Archaeology | TweedWATCH Education Pack

5 Introduction

6 Background Notes: Archaeological Time Periods

10 Examining Ancient Diets

10 Examining Ancient Diets Lesson Plan

12 Background Notes: Examining Ancient Diets

16 Examining Ancient Diets: Food Chart

18 Roundhouse Life in 500 BCE: Bran's Story

19 A Military Family in Britannia, 150 CE: Lepidina's Story Worksheets

20 Bran's Favourite Foods

21 Lepidina's Favourite Foods

22 Design an Iron Age Menu

River Rituals

24 River Rituals Lesson Plan

26 Background Notes: Ritual Deposition in Watery Places

28 River Guardians of Tomorrow: Activity Instructions

31 Worksheets

31 River Ritual Pledge Design

32 Design an Iron Age Collar

33 Design a Sword Sheath

34 Design an Iron Age Shield

35 La Tène Designs from Britain & Ireland

36 Bronze Age Beakers

36 Bronze Age Beakers Lesson Plan

38 Background Notes: Bronze Age Beakers

39 Make a Bronze Age Beaker: Activity Instructions

43 Worksheets

43 Design Your Beaker

44 Glossary

46 Curriculum Links

SECOND LEVEL KS2

Image: Airborne Lens Photography

Introduction

Thousands of Years of Human History

For thousands of years, the River Tweed has been a focal point for people: communities who lived, worked and died in the landscapes around the river. The river was, and is, a source of water and food. It was both a barrier and a means of transport, creating a natural boundary that had to be crossed by bridge, boat or ford, while people and goods could travel from A to B on its rippled surface. Industries grew along its banks, and towns sprang up to house the workers. For these reasons, rivers have long attracted people to their banks and to their waters.

Traces of past communities can be found all around us, from tiny flint flakes that provide clues to the area's earliest inhabitants, to historic buildings that are still used and lived in today. There are over 7000 known archaeological sites within the Destination Tweed project area, and many more yet to be identified.

The activities in this section of the Education Pack encourage learners to think about life in the past through a handful of themes: looking at rivers as focal points for ritual behaviour; thinking about diet and what kinds of food were available; and connecting with crafts by making replica clay vessels.

Introducing Archaeology: Resource Signposting

Short Videos

BBC Teach: The History of Archaeology: Proud to be an Archaeologist (4m)
This short video gives learners an overview of what archaeology is and why it matters. It shows how archaeologists work by digging up, studying, and caring for things from the past to learn about how people lived long ago. The video emphasises that archaeology isn't just about stones and bones, but understanding change, identity and communities.

Online Resources

Dig It!: "The Easiest Guide to Scotland's Archaeological Time Periods and Ages" (blog post, 3000 words)
This clear, teacher-friendly blog outlines Scotland's main archaeological periods from the earliest hunter-gatherers to medieval times. It highlights key features of each era and notes that dates are only approximate, making it a handy quick reference for lesson planning or class timeline activities.

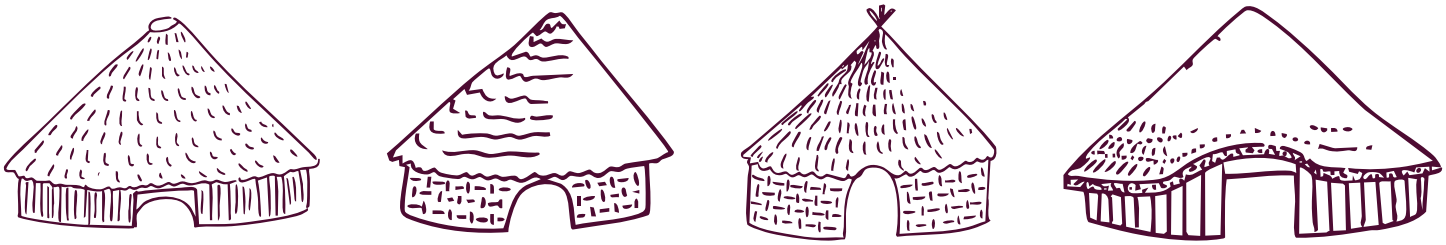
Check out the **TweedWATCH Education Pack Resource Signposting Padlet** for links to all of the resources referenced.

Archaeological Time Periods

Background Notes

Timeline: Archaeology in the Landscape

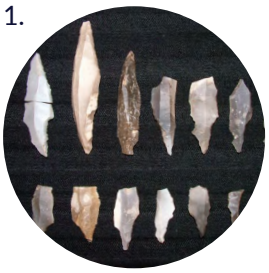
While some archaeology is invisible to the naked eye, deep underground, there is plenty that we can see in the landscape: from grassy lumps and bumps that represent buried buildings, to the remains of massive castles and abbeys that stand tall in our towns. Below are examples of some key sites and discoveries close to the Tweed that help tell the river's stories.



Palaeolithic (pre–10,800 BCE) & Mesolithic (around 10,800 BCE–4100 BCE)

Northern Britain was covered in ice until around 14,000 years ago, when the ice receded and vegetation began to grow on the newly exposed soils. The earliest evidence for human habitation in Scotland comes from a site in South Lanarkshire, with the discovery of hundreds of lithics (small stone tools) and the waste from their production – showing that people had reached this part of Scotland towards the end of the Palaeolithic period. The first people in Britain lived hunter-gatherer-fisher lifestyles, moving with the seasons.

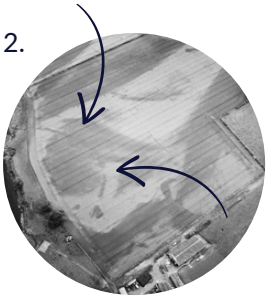
1.



Neolithic (4100 BCE–2500 BCE)

This period sees the transition from hunter-gatherer to settled farming lifestyles. There is very little definitively Neolithic archaeology visible on the ground in the project area. A possible Neolithic complex near Sprouston including a D-shaped causewayed ditch is visible only as cropmarks – where buried features have affected the growth and ripening of crops growing above them, creating shapes that are most clearly visible from above e.g. in aerial photographs. However, this site may also have elements that date to the early medieval period, making categorisation complex!

2.



Images: 1. © Biggar Museum Trust (Records relating to Tam Ward, Archaeologist). Courtesy of HES.
2. Crown Copyright: HES

Bronze Age (2500 BCE–800 BCE)

During the Bronze Age, people began building large enclosed sites on hilltops – hillforts. People lived in roundhouses, often set in groups, with adjacent field systems where they grew crops and reared cows and sheep. In 2020, near Peebles, a metal detectorist discovered a hoard of over 500 bronze, leather and wooden items, including a complete sword in a wooden scabbard, and numerous decorative fittings for horse harnesses. This is one of the most significant Bronze Age hoards ever found in Scotland. **Lots more information is available on National Museums Scotland's website**.

3.

Iron Age (800 BCE–400 CE)

Iron Age architecture remains largely circular, as in the Bronze Age. The bigger, the better! Communities built large structures as a way of displaying status: brochs (tall drystone towers), more substantial roundhouses, and hillforts. The fort on Eildon Hill North is one of the most famous hillforts in northern Britain, and the largest Iron Age hillfort in Scotland. Within the massive enclosing banks and ditches are traces of hundreds of roundhouses, suggesting that this hilltop was home to a large community. Most Iron Age families in this area would have lived in smaller villages, now known as scooped settlements. Traces of these settlements are visible on hillsides all along the Tweed and in North Northumberland, particularly in the Cheviots.

4.

Roman Iron Age (77 CE–211 CE)

Britain north of Hadrian's Wall (which ran from Newcastle in the east, to the west coast at Bowness-on-Solway) was never fully within Roman control, so archaeologists often use the term 'Roman Iron Age' rather than 'Roman period'. Life for many continued much as before, despite the Romans venturing well into northern Scotland, and also building the Antonine Wall (cutting across Scotland from the Clyde in the west to the Forth in the east). The Roman fort at Newstead was named after the nearby Eildon Hills: Trimontium, 'the place of the three hills'. Following many years of agricultural activity on the site of the fort, it is now most visible as cropmarks in aerial photographs. This is the largest Roman complex in Scotland, and was once home to perhaps around 1000 soldiers, and many more people in the town (or vicus) that grew up next to the fort.

5.

Images: 3. Image © National Museums Scotland. 4. Image: Crown Copyright: HES.
5. Artist's impression of Trimontium Roman Fort c. 140AD by D. Simon © Trimontium Trust

NB: We have used the secular alternatives BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) throughout this resource, rather than BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini, or 'in the Year of the Lord').

Archaeological Time Periods

Early Historic (400 CE–1100 CE)

The early historic, or early medieval, period was previously known as the Dark Ages, because so little used to be known about this era. Certainly, there are fewer large and obvious remains visible in the landscape. Buildings were often made of timber and turf during this period, meaning they don't tend to leave many visible traces in the landscape today. Hillforts continue to be a feature of early medieval life, with a site at Tinnis, near Drumelzier, being a key example. The Iron Age hillfort here was reused and expanded in the early historic period, during the late 5th and early 6th centuries.

6.

Medieval (1100 CE–1500 CE)

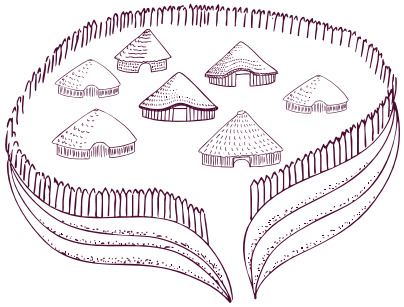
Perhaps the most obvious reminders of the medieval period today are the massive stone buildings that continue to dominate our skylines – abbeys and castles in particular. The church became immensely wealthy and powerful, controlling large swathes of land and collecting tithes (rent) from its many tenants. The wooden castles of the early medieval period were replaced by massive stone castles, many of which survive in ruins, such as Norham Castle. Tower houses like Smailholm Tower are particularly characteristic of the Border regions in the medieval period and beyond. They provided protection in troubled times (against the Border reivers, for example) and made a statement about status.

7.

Post-medieval/modern (After 1500 CE)

Archaeologists often refer to anything after the medieval period as 'modern' or 'post-medieval', but this represents over 500 years of recent history! It's difficult to pinpoint any key site or sites that represent this time period, as there was significant change; however, a key theme is industry in its many forms. The Tweed was a focus for industry, with the power of water being harnessed to support various manufacturing and processing methods. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Tweed and its tributaries powered hundreds of mills including many textile mills. Some of these mills survive today, with the buildings often being repurposed for alternative uses.

8.



Images: 6. © Walter Baxter (cc-by-sa/2.0) 7. Airborne Lens Photography 8. © Iain Lees (cc-by-sa/2.0)

Image: Airborne Lens Photography

Examining Ancient Diets

Lesson Plan

Learning Objectives

- Explore how archaeologists discover what people ate in the past.
- Identify foods that were available during the Iron Age.
- Recognise 'new' foods that were introduced to Britain by the Romans.
- Create and present a menu inspired by ancient diets.

Equipment & Resources

- Pens/pencils, worksheets and reading comprehension sheets, food chart, printed or for display on a smartboard

Vocabulary

Native and non-native species, imported, amphora/amphorae, cereals, ceramic, hillfort, Roman fort

Introduction

Ask your learners how they think we might find out what people ate in the past. Archaeologists can examine waste items in rubbish pits/ middens or around the hearth. They can even examine ancient poo (coprolites) from pits or latrines. They can examine bones, seeds, cereal grains and so on.

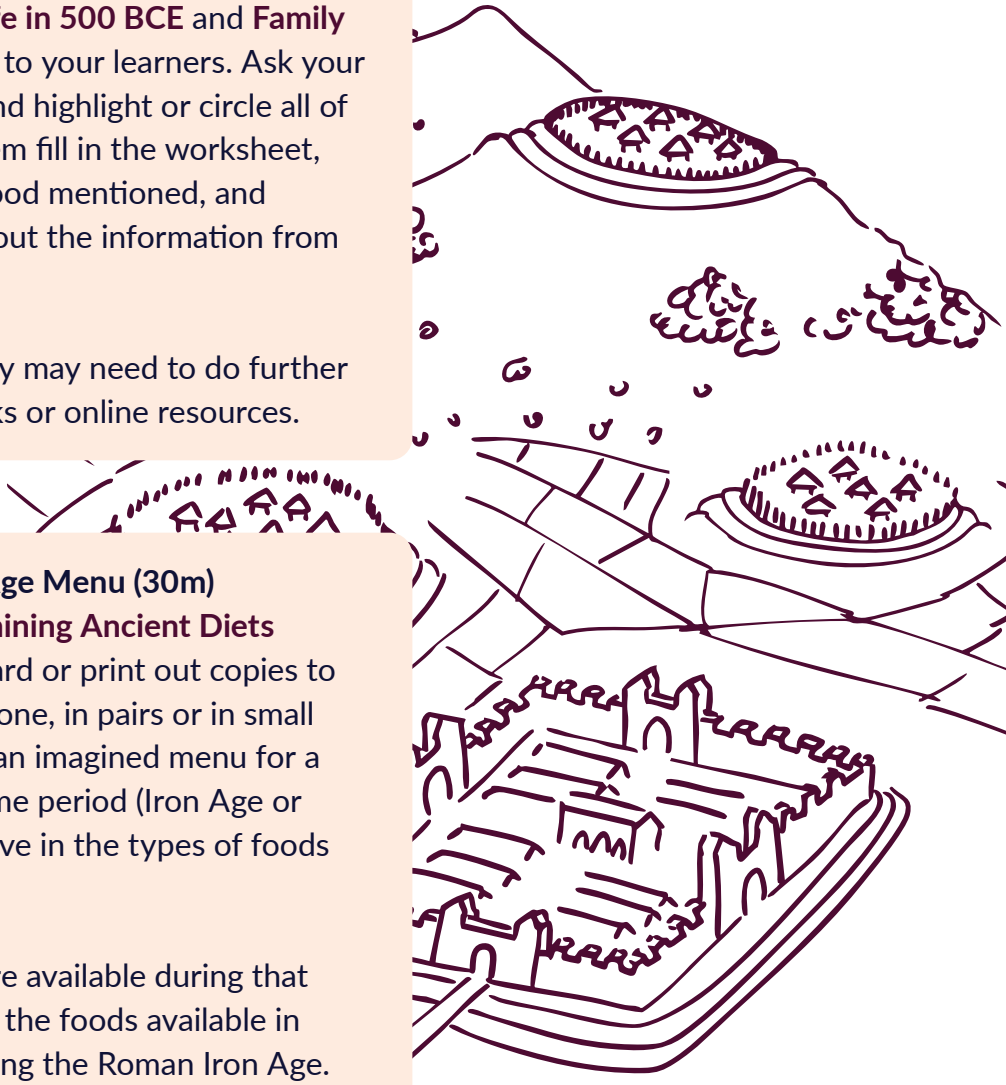
Talk about native and non-native plants and animal species, and discuss whether people living in Britain in the past would have eaten all of the same foods we eat today. Consider things like how climate affects what grows locally, how some foods last longer than others (dried, frozen or tinned foods vs fresh) and transport options (planes and ships taking food all over the world). We have many more choices today than in the past.

Discuss how easy or hard it might have been to eat a balanced diet in the past. There was no refined sugar or 'fast/junk food' in Iron Age/ Roman Britain, so diets were mostly lower in fats and sugar. However, the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables would have been very seasonal, so it may have been harder to get the optimum range of vitamins and minerals. There may also have been significant periods of scarcity during hard winters, if the crops failed, or if food stores were damaged/destroyed, for example.

Activities

Examining Ancient Diets: Worksheets 1 & 2 (30m)
Distribute the **Examining Ancient Diets Worksheets** and the accompanying texts (**Roundhouse life in 500 BCE** and **Family Life in Britannia in 150 CE, p.18–19**) to your learners. Ask your learners to read through the texts and highlight or circle all of the foods mentioned. Then have them fill in the worksheet, categorising the different types of food mentioned, and answering the questions by picking out the information from the texts.

There are additional questions – they may need to do further research to answer these using books or online resources.



Create an Iron Age or Roman Iron Age Menu (30m)
Display the food charts on the **Examining Ancient Diets Background Notes** on the smart board or print out copies to distribute. Your learners can work alone, in pairs or in small groups. Ask your learners to design an imagined menu for a three course meal in their chosen time period (Iron Age or Roman Iron Age). They can be creative in the types of foods they put together!

They should use only foods that were available during that time period. Remind them that all of the foods available in the Iron Age were also available during the Roman Iron Age. Encourage them to build a balanced menu, with a mix of proteins, carbohydrates and fats.

Lepidina's story includes mention of 'servants' who serve her family. This draws on the Latin word 'servus' and is intended to indicate that the individual in question was an enslaved person. The word 'slave' was not used until some centuries later. While there is no mention of slavery in Bran's story, we know that slavery was well-established in Iron Age Britain too. Indeed, enslaved people were exported from Britain into the Roman Empire during this time, as part of a thriving Iron Age economy.

Examining Ancient Diets: How do we know what people ate in the past?

Background Notes

Archaeologists can look at a range of evidence to find out what people ate in the past. Food waste such as cereal grains, seeds, nut shells, mollusc shells and animal bones are often found in hearths, middens and rubbish pits. Animal bones sometimes have knife marks on them, which show that the animal was butchered for food. Latrines, or toilets, can also be a source of information! Some foodstuffs pass through the digestive system intact – seeds and grains, for example – and can later be examined under a microscope. We can also analyse food residues on cooking vessels to find out what people were eating.

Iron Age Diet

During the Iron Age in Britain, farming was the main way of life: people reared sheep, goats and cattle for milk, meat, skins and wool, and kept pigs for meat (pork was probably an occasional treat). They grew cereal crops – barley, wheat and oats – and ground grain to make flour for bread. Peas and Celtic beans (a bit like broad beans) were also grown.

Hunting, gathering and fishing added variety to the Iron Age diet: wild animals such as deer provided meat (probably an occasional treat); fruits such as crab apples and crowberries were available at certain times of year; and fish and shellfish from rivers, lochs and the sea were also an option. However, farmed produce formed the bulk of the diet. Porridges, soups and stews were probably staples, cooked in ceramic pots by the fire. Foods could also be cooked in the embers or on spits. Meat and fish could be hung from the rafters to smoke and dry, preserving them for later.


Barley


Oats


Wheat


Hazelnuts


Honey


Beef


Lamb/mutton


Pork


Venison


Dairy products


Fish


Shellfish


Crowberries


Fat hen


Crab apples

Examining Ancient Diets

Background Notes

The Roman Influence

The Romans arrived in Britain in 42 CE. While large parts of England to the south of Hadrian's Wall (built in the second century CE) were under Roman control during their occupation, the northern part of Britain was never fully Romanised. The Roman army travelled all over Scotland and sailed around it by sea, mapping this 'new' land. We can trace their movements through the identification of temporary marching camps, which can be found as far north as Elgin, north-east of Inverness. However, the Roman presence was more keenly felt in southern Scotland.

Northern Scotland was never part of the Roman Empire, and we know that fierce battles were fought as local tribes resisted Roman rule. For this reason, we don't have a clear "Roman period" north of Hadrian's Wall. Instead, archaeologists often talk about the Roman Iron Age, from 77 CE to 211 CE, when there was an intermittent or inconsistent Roman presence north of Hadrian's Wall, and the Roman influence was most strongly felt in this part of Britain. However, life for many people in northern Britain continued much as it was before: they built houses in their traditional/local styles, spoke their own languages and dressed in local fashions.

There are Roman sites all across the Destination Tweed project area, the most famous being the fort at Newstead (also known as Trimontium, Latin for 'place of the three hills', due to its location near the Eildon Hills). The fort was occupied on and off between around 79 CE to 184 CE.

When the Romans arrived in Britain in 42 CE, they brought many new objects, ideas and technologies with them: pottery made on the wheel, brick buildings and paved roads, to name a few. Not all of these ideas caught on, though, and many of them faded out when the Romans left.

One area that the Roman presence influenced was food and diet. The Romans brought over 50 new foods with them: some that they made and transported, such as fish sauce, which was imported in large ceramic jars called amphorae, and others that became established in Britain, such as plants and animals. Some of the 'new' fruits and vegetables grew well in Britain and became staples in the local diet long after the Romans had left.

So, someone living in Britain during the Roman Iron Age could have enjoyed all the foods listed in the Iron Age section, but with the addition of the following foodstuffs, depending on local availability or opportunities to trade.


Cabbage


Leeks


Onions


Turnips


Celery


Cucumbers


Walnuts


Apples


Grapes


Pears


Cherries


Plums


Pheasant


Hare*


Chicken*, eggs


Rabbit**


Wine


Mulberries


Olive oil


(fish sauce)

* Hares and chickens were brought to Britain during the Iron Age, but they were seen as special, even god-like, so weren't eaten. It was only during the Roman period that they were farmed for food. After the Romans left, hares and chickens (and eggs!) went back to being considered too special to eat.

** It is thought that the Romans brought rabbits to Britain for food, but they died out again after the Romans left. They were reintroduced centuries later, during the medieval period, when they were farmed for the wealthy.

No sugar, tomatoes or potatoes!

While sugar, tomatoes and potatoes might be staples today, they arrived in Britain quite recently. Sugar was brought back by soldiers returning from the Crusades in the Middle East in the 11th century. Potatoes and tomatoes arrived in the 16th century.

Examining Ancient Diets: Food Chart

Iron Age Options

Grains



Iron Age farmers grew wheat, barley and oats. These could be ground into flour for bread or griddlecakes/ pancakes, added to soups and stews, or made into porridge.

Meat



Farmers kept cattle and sheep, which provided beef and lamb/mutton. They may also have kept a few pigs for pork, probably eaten only on special occasions.

Dairy

Cows were kept for their milk too, which could be made into cream, cheese and butter

Gathering

Wild hazelnuts, seeds, berries, crab apples, leafy plants such as fat hen and even honey from wild bees could be gathered at certain times of year, to add a wider range of flavours.

Hunting & Fishing



Fish, shellfish and meats such as venison added variety to the Iron Age diet, but wouldn't have been eaten every day by most people.

Roman Iron Age (Additional Options)

Vegetables



The Romans brought a wide range of new vegetables to Britain, including cabbages, leeks, onions, turnips, celery and cucumbers.

Fruits



Plums, cherries, grapes, apples, mulberries & pears were all on the menu.



Hares and chickens were brought to Britain during the Iron Age, but they were seen as special, even god-like, so weren't eaten. It was only during the Roman period that they were farmed for food. It is thought that the Romans brought rabbits to Britain for food, but they died out again after the Romans left.

Amphorae

Wine, olive oil and garum (fish sauce) were transported around the Roman Empire in massive jars called amphorae.

No sugar, tomatoes or potatoes!

Sugar, tomatoes and potatoes only arrived in Britain really quite recently. Sugar was brought back by soldiers returning from the Crusades in the Middle East in the 11th century. Potatoes and tomatoes arrived in the 16th century.

Roundhouse Life: 500BCE

My name is Bran. I live with my family in a roundhouse on a hillside close to a river. There are lots of us in my household – my brothers and sisters, my parents, grandparents and two of my aunties. Everyone helps around the house and on the farm, there are always so many jobs to do!

We have twelve cows, and one of my jobs is milking them in the mornings and in the evenings. I help churn the milk to make butter as well. We have goats and sheep too, but they don't produce as much milk as the cows, and they are much grumpier about being milked! We make wool from the sheep's fleeces. We have a few pigs who eat the scraps from our meals; we are fattening them up for a feast in the autumn.

Near our house we have fields where we grow crops, mostly barley but also wheat and oats. We keep some of it for ourselves and trade the rest. I help to grind the grain with the heavy quern stone to make it into flour for bread. We eat a lot of bread and porridge, and some meat. I gather plants to add to porridges and stews, to make them taste better; there's lots of leafy fat hen near our house. I help to cook meals on the fire in the middle of our roundhouse, and I gather and chop firewood too. The fire is a bit smoky, but it keeps us warm!

There are some crab apple trees nearby – the apples are so sour! But when you cook them, they turn sticky and we make them into jam. Sometimes we add honey to sweeten the jam, if we can take it from the wild bees without being stung too many times...! We also gather berries – crowberries are my favourite – and lots of hazelnuts. Sometimes we eat fish, too, caught in the river, but not often.

My mother's people live by the sea, and she tells me they eat all sorts of shellfish: mussels, periwinkles, limpets, even many-legged creatures that scuttle sideways, waving their pinching claws.

Occasionally, the grown-ups will catch a deer and we will eat venison for days! We also use the deer antlers to make objects such as combs. When we kill an animal, we eat what we can and use lots of the other parts – bone, antler, skins, sinew – to make things.

What we can't use, we give to the dogs. We don't waste much!

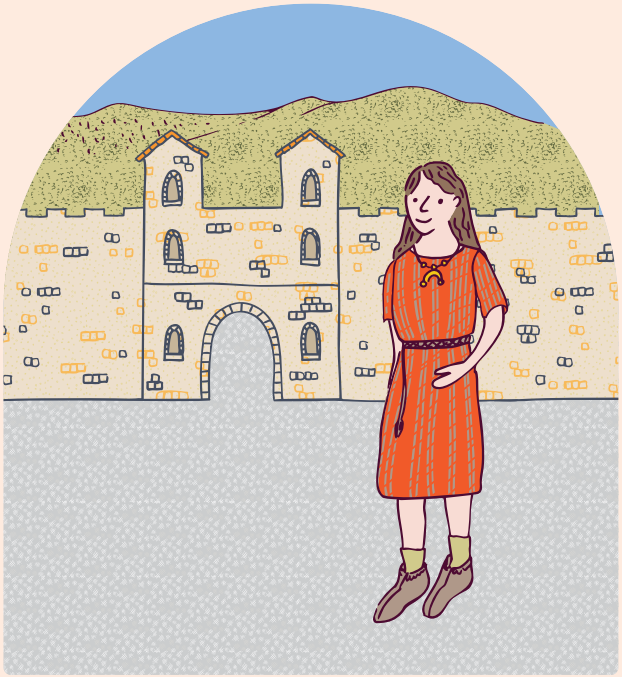
A Military Family in Britannia: 150CE

My name is Lepidina. A few years ago, my family left our home in Gaul and came with my father to Britannia because of his job. My father is a commanding officer in the Roman army – that means he's very important, and people have to do what he says! My mother, sister and I live in a town called Eboracum, but we are visiting him where he is stationed, in a large fort close to a river, and near a group of three hills; this fort is called Trimontium.

One of those hills has a large fort on the top, but it's round, not square like ours, and the buildings inside it are round too, with pointy roofs. It is colder here than at home in Gaul but there are lots of other children to play with in the fort, and in the vicus – that's the town just outside the fort.

I thought that when we came to Britannia, I would miss my favourite foods from back home in Gaul, but I needn't have worried – the army brings lots of food with it, loaded up into massive carts and pulled along the roads by oxen: sacks of grain, amphorae of olive oil and fish sauce. When we travelled to Trimontium, we brought rabbits, hares and chickens in cages in our carts. The animals didn't enjoy the journey through the hills very much, the chickens squawked a lot, but we enjoyed eating the eggs with tasty fish sauce. My favourite snack!

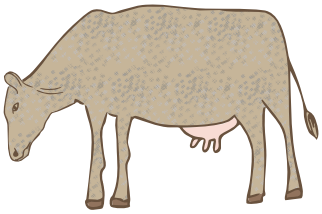
The soldiers can also trade with local people for other foods, like grain grown nearby, or hunt near the fort for deer and other wild animals. Most of the soldiers cook for themselves, and they eat boring food – bread, soup, cheese, bacon – but because my dad is an important person in the army, we have meals cooked for us by servants who serve our family. My favourite meal is lamb with plum sauce, followed by walnut tart – delicious! My favourite fruits are cherries, plums, grapes, apples and pears. We use all sorts of vegetables in cooking too: celery, leeks, onions, turnips, and cucumber.



Lots of the flavours of home, but here, in Britannia!

Bran's Favourite Foods

Read 'Roundhouse Life in 500 BCE' to learn about Bran's life and to help you answer the questions below.



What foods does Bran mention? Write them down here, grouping them into categories:

Where does Bran live?

Where does most of Bran's family's food come from?

What are Bran's favourite berries?

What sorts of meats are a rare treat for Bran?

What are some of Bran's chores?

Digging deeper!

What do you think Bran means by
"many-legged creatures that scuttle sideways, waving their pinching claws"?

.....

.....

Lepidina's Favourite Foods

Read 'A Military Family in Britannia, 150 CE' to learn about Lepidina's life and to help you answer the questions below.

What foods does Lepidina mention? Write them down here, grouping them into categories:

Where does Lepidina's family live?

How did they get to Trimontium?

Who cooks for Lepidina's family?

What is Lepidina's favourite snack?

What foods do Roman soldiers eat?

You might need to do some research for these questions

Digging deeper!

What is the name we use now for the town that Lepidina lives in?

.....

What does Trimontium mean?

.....

MENU

Plan an Iron Age or Roman Iron Age meal for your family and friends.

Starter

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Main Course

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Dessert

.....

.....

.....

Drinks

.....

.....

.....

River Rituals

Lesson Plan

Learning Objectives

- Explore why rivers and watery places were considered special in the Iron Age.
- Identify features of Iron Age art, including the La Tène style.
- Investigate how archaeologists uncover evidence of past ritual behaviour.

Equipment & Materials

- Pens/pencils, worksheets, La Tène Designs from Britain and Ireland, printed out or for display on a smartboard, foraged materials for creating wreaths/posies, Our Pledge sheets

Vocabulary

Ritual, votive, deposit, La Tène, stylised.

Introduction

Discuss the concept of ritual behaviour with your learners. Explain that rituals can be defined as a set of actions or words performed regularly, often as part of a religious ceremony. Ask if they can think of any examples of rituals that they might participate in or know about today. Religious examples could include rolling eggs down a hill at Easter, fasting during Ramadan, and lighting lamps during Diwali.

Not all rituals are connected to religion, your school probably has its own rituals too: singing certain songs, carrying out specific ceremonies (for school leavers, for example). The Common Ridings and other traditional local/regional festivals include ritual behaviours during set ceremonies and events. Any actions that are done repeatedly, following a set format, and that have special meaning, can be considered ritual behaviour.

Explain that during the Iron Age, watery places such as rivers, lochs and bogs were considered special places, and that people used to place precious items in these watery places. Ask why they think people in the past may have done this. Archaeologists believe that the items were deposited in these watery places as offerings to their gods, perhaps as a way of asking for a good harvest, or a mild winter, or for good health for their community.

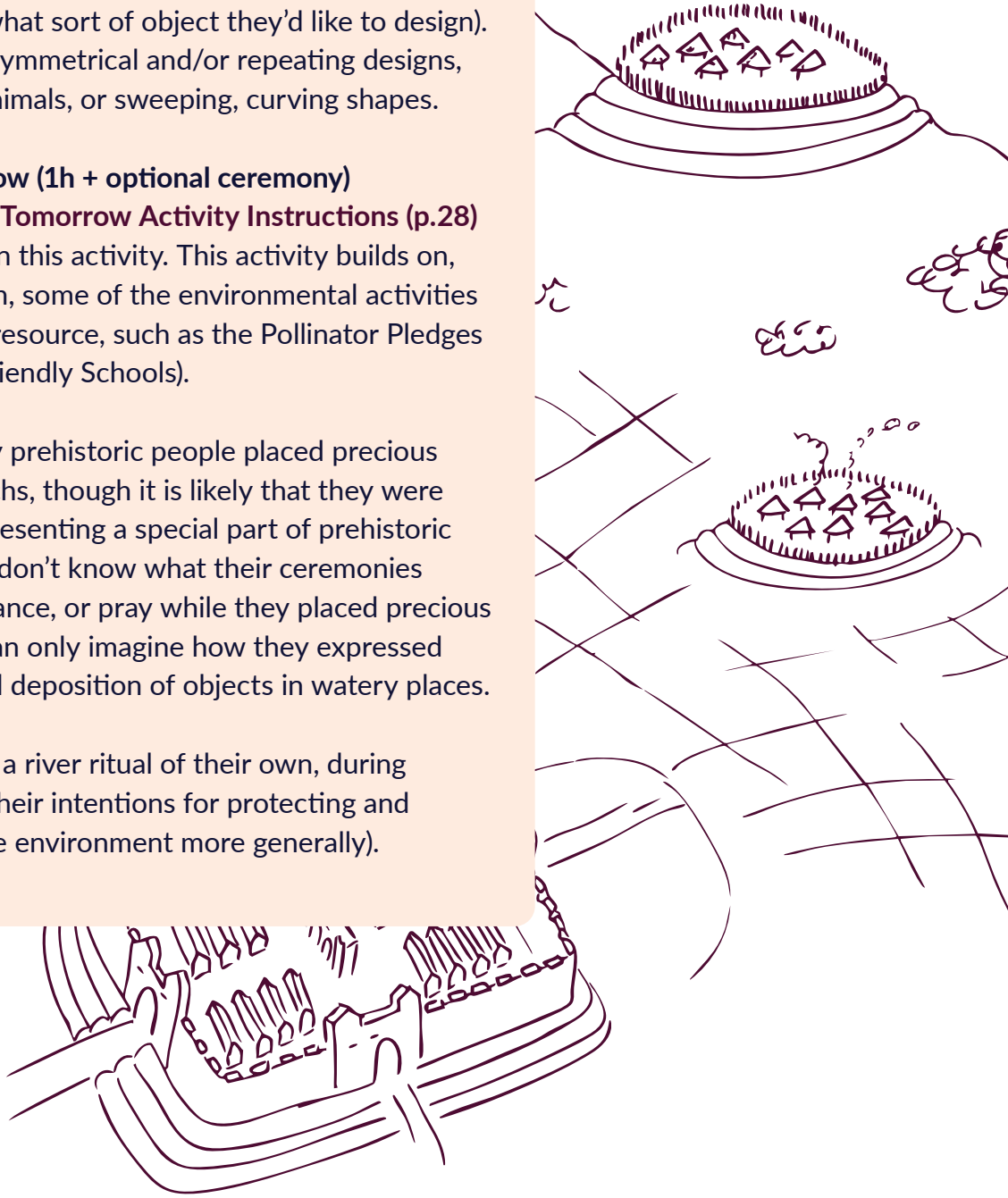
Activities

La Tène Designs: Worksheets (30m)
Display the image showing examples of **La Tène Art in Britain and Ireland (p.35)** on the smart board, and/or have your learners search and find other examples of La Tène art using their devices. They could use Padlets or similar to create inspiration boards of their ideas. Distribute the La Tène Art Worksheets to your learners (they can choose what sort of object they'd like to design). Most La Tène art features symmetrical and/or repeating designs, often with stylised faces, animals, or sweeping, curving shapes.

River Guardians of Tomorrow (1h + optional ceremony)
See the River Guardians of Tomorrow Activity Instructions (p.28)
for full details on how to run this activity. This activity builds on, and could be combined with, some of the environmental activities provided elsewhere in this resource, such as the Pollinator Pledges (River Wildlife: Pollinator Friendly Schools).

We don't know exactly why prehistoric people placed precious items in bogs, rivers and lochs, though it is likely that they were offerings of some kind, representing a special part of prehistoric spiritual practices. We also don't know what their ceremonies looked like: did they sing, dance, or pray while they placed precious items into the water? We can only imagine how they expressed themselves during the ritual deposition of objects in watery places.

Ask your learners to design a river ritual of their own, during which they should set out their intentions for protecting and preserving their river (or the environment more generally).



River Rituals: Ritual Deposition in Watery Places

Background Notes

Rivers and other watery places – bogs, lochs, streams – were special places in prehistory. During the Bronze Age (c. 2500 BCE-800 BCE) and Iron Age (c. 800 BCE-400 CE), watery places were a focal point for ritual activity across what we now know as northern Europe. People deposited items in watery places, perhaps as offerings to their deities. The items varied but often included metalwork – weaponry, bowls, cups, etc. Sometimes huge collections of items are discovered together, deposited all at once. The intentional deposition of valuable goods suggests that they were deposited for their special significance, rather than in spite of it. Many of the items deposited are made of bronze. Some people believe that the vibrant colour of bronze might have been considered to represent the sun, the deposition of bronze items into water therefore representing the joining of water and sun, two essential life-giving elements.

Ancient Works of Art

A key example of an item deposited in the River Tweed is a sword-sheath found at Carham (right). The sword itself was not found, but the sheath is a beautiful object in its own right. It belongs to a style known as La Tène, a term which describes the material culture of the second half of the Iron Age across much of northern and western Europe, from 450 BCE up to the time of the Roman Conquest (42 CE).

La Tène objects often feature beautiful decorative patterns, with many swirls, curves and waves. La Tène art, which includes decorated metalwork such as jewellery or weaponry, sometimes features stylised animals and birds, depicted with sweeping curves and swirling shapes. Another beautiful item in the La Tène style is a collar or neck ring discovered in the 18th century by workers who were digging a well at Stichill, a little way north of the Tweed at Kelso (below, right). It was probably deposited into a spring – the source of a stream. It was found alongside the remains of two chunky arm rings, another type of conspicuously chunky jewellery worn as a statement of status and power. The decoration on the neck ring has been interpreted as showing lopsided faces on either side of the central panel. Stylised faces are a key motif in La Tène art.

3.

1.

2.

1. Bronze torc from Lochar Moss, Dumfries & Galloway © The Trustees of the British Museum
2. Collar or torc of bronze, hinged, probably made in the West Midlands (England) of late Celtic type, found near Stichill, Roxburghshire, 1st – 2nd century AD (Image © National Museums Scotland)
3. Sword sheath from Carham, Northumberland © The Trustees of the British Museum

River Guardians of Tomorrow

Activity Instructions

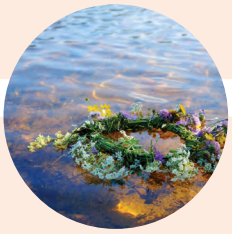
This activity can be adjusted to suit your school, and whether or not you have a river or other watery place nearby.

Set out your intentions (15m): Your learners should discuss and write down the actions they will take to protect the river (using the **River Ritual Pledge Worksheet, p.31**). Pledges could include: not dropping litter, which later ends up in waterways; tackling invasive, non-native species where appropriate, such as pulling up Himalayan balsam in early summer to impede its spread; providing bug hotels to support a range of minibeasts; scattering wildflower seeds to support pollinators.

Design your ceremony (30m): Plan out your ceremony and rehearse as needed. Your ceremony might include a song, a dance, expressive movement, or a piece of music.

Create small wreaths or posies from foraged natural materials (30m): Gather twigs, grasses, leaves, feathers and so on from the playground. Don't add any non-foraged materials to your wreath, even natural twine, since they did not come from the local environment.

Hold a ceremony: (This can be as simple or as elaborate as you like, timing will depend on your plans!) Ask your learners to state their intentions out loud, present their offerings to the river, and perform any ritual songs, dances or whatever has been planned. Their natural wreaths can be laid or dropped on the surface of the water (if safe to do so). As the river current takes their offerings downstream, tell your learners to envisage their intentions flowing out and into action. Encourage your learners to become guardians of the river and its flora and fauna, protecting it for the future.

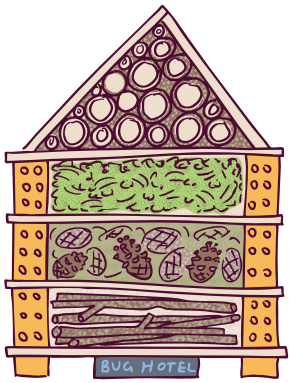


Adaptation if you do not have access to a river or watery place: Adapt the activity to suit your local landscape. Can you make a commitment to protect the trees, or the bees, or the butterflies? Learners can create a small offering based on whatever they can gather – a posy of wildflowers, a daisy chain, a crown of autumn leaves (lots of tutorials online!) – and hold the ceremony within the school grounds.

If you can't hold a ceremony: Learners can commit their pledges to paper using the **Our Pledge sheets (p.31)**, create posters setting out their intentions and display them in the classroom or the corridor, and/or share their intentions with the rest of the school at assembly.

Follow Up: Take Action

If you can, follow up the pledge ceremony by taking action, carrying out activities which align with the pledges and contribute to protecting the environment.



You could:

- Organise a litter pick.
- Raise funds to set up and maintain a bird feeding station in the playground through the winter months.
- Create and maintain an area of wildflower meadow in your school grounds.
- Build and install bug hotels or bird boxes.
- Check out the Freshwater Action Bingo Resource in the Water Pollution topic of this pack for ideas on how to conserve water and reduce pollution.

See the **Resource Signposting** section below for sources of funding or provision of free materials for schools.

Funds for School-Based Environmental Projects: Resource Signposting

Learning Through Landscapes' Local School Nature Grants:
https://ltl.org.uk/projects/local-school-nature-grants/

Bright Green Nature's 'Wild Your Space' Microfund (open to households and schools, Scottish Borders only): **https://brightgreennature.org/funding/**

The Woodland Trust's Free Tree packs:
https://woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/

The Tree Council's Orchards for Schools programme:
https://treecouncil.org.uk/grants-and-guidance/our-grants/orchards-for-schools/

The Conservation Volunteers' I Dig Trees programme:
https://www.tcv.org.uk/i-dig-trees-free-trees/

Grow Your Own Potatoes free potato growing kits: **https://growyourownpotatoes.org.uk/**

Carbon Footprint's UK Tree Planting Project:
https://www.carbonfootprint.com/tree_application.html

Tree Appeal's Trees for Schools: **https://www.treeappeal.com/Schools.html**

Check out the **TweedWATCH Education Pack Resource Signposting Padlet** for links to all of the resources referenced.

Ancient Instruments: Resource Signposting

If your learners wish to compose a piece of music to perform during their pledge ceremony, they could refer to ancient musical instruments. There are a few from Scotland, including various whistles, the lyre and the carnyx.

EXARC's recording of a replica Iron Age whistle from Loch Tay: Oakbank Dog Rose (1m)

Historic Environment Scotland's video about the fragment of a lyre from High Pasture Cave, Skye: Ancient Stringed Instrument (3m)

National Museums Scotland video, The Sound of a Carnyx (35s)

La Tène Art: Resource Signposting

If your learners are keen to explore Iron Age and La Tène art further, the British Museum has created a classroom resource which includes the depiction of faces in Iron Age art, with activity suggestions (ages 7-11/KS2).

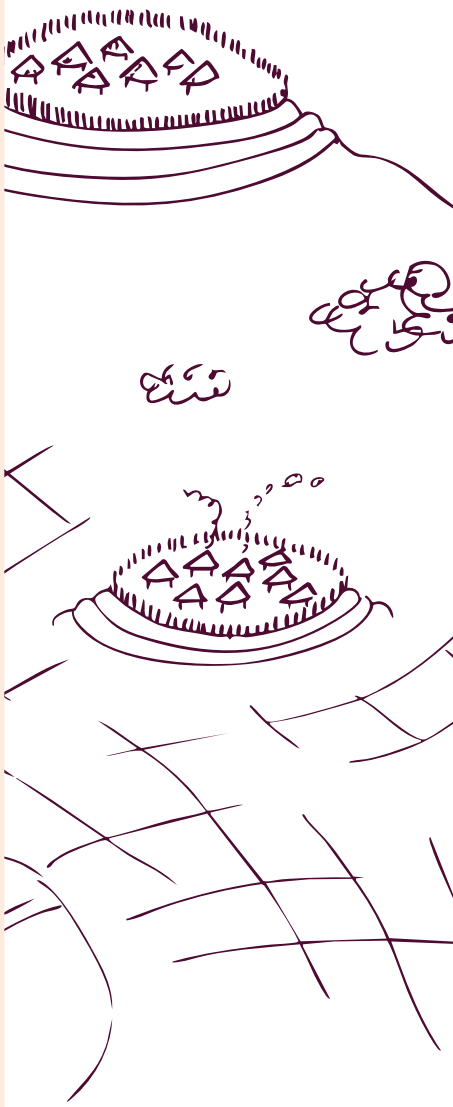
People of Iron Age Britain (PowerPoint image bank and accompanying Word doc).

The BBC website has resources specific to the Iron Age, including a section on Iron Age art: **What did people make? (webpage)**

Ritual & Ceremony: Resource Signposting

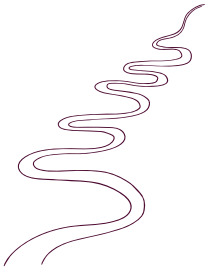
A community archaeology project in Wales saw a local primary school create and enact their own ceremonies at Tinkinswood Burial Chamber. Take a look for inspiration!

Heritage in Wales: Digs and Rituals Article (pdf)

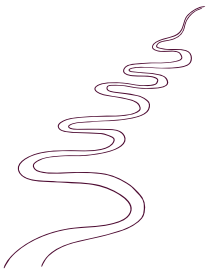


Check out the **TweedWATCH Education Pack Resource Signposting Padlet** for links to all of the resources referenced.

River Ritual Pledge



River Ritual Pledge



Design an Iron Age Collar

Design your own collar in the La Tène style

The Stichill collar, or neck-ring, was found in a spring (the source of a stream) close to the River Tweed at Stichill, near Kelso. It was probably placed in the spring during a special ceremony nearly 2000 years ago, during the Iron Age. Can you make out the faces in the design? Design your own collar in the La Tène style. Note the symmetrical design of the Stichill collar. Can you make yours symmetrical too?

Image: Collar or torc of bronze, hinged, probably made in the West Midlands (England) of late Celtic type, found near Stichill, Roxburghshire, 1st – 2nd century CE" (Image © National Museums Scotland)

Design a Sword Sheath

Design your own sword sheath in the La Tène style

A sword sheath is a cover for a sword's blade, protecting it and the person carrying it. Have a go at designing your own sheath, looking at the two pictured for inspiration. Both of these were placed in watery places, likely during special ceremonies over 2000 years ago, during the Iron Age.

1. © The Trustees of the British Museum

This sword sheath was found in Lisnocroghera Bog in Ireland.

The tip of the sword sheath is called a 'chape'. Decorate this part with a symmetrical design.

2. © The Trustees of the British Museum

This sword sheath was found in the River Tweed near Carham.

Design an Iron Age Shield

Design your own shield in the La Tène style

A shield is a defensive tool, used for protection. The **Battersea Shield** shown below was found in the River Thames in London. This metal part would have covered a wooden shield. It was probably placed in the river during a special ceremony over 2000 years ago, during the Iron Age.

Have a go at designing your own shield in the La Tène style.

Image: © The Trustees of the British Museum

La Tène Designs from Britain & Ireland

Bronze Age Beakers

Lesson Plan

Learning Objectives

- Explore prehistoric pottery, with a focus on Bronze Age Beakers.
- Learn and practise a method for making hand-made pottery.
- Create a repeating pattern to decorate a pot.

Vocabulary

Beaker, prehistoric, pottery, ceramic, kiln

Equipment & Resources

- Pencils and paper for designing beakers and patterns, air drying clay (a 12.5kg bag will be enough for up to 30 beakers), pots/cups of water, clay modelling tools/lollipop sticks, foraged items for decorating: pebbles, twigs, twine etc, aprons for keeping clothes clean, cloths/sponges and water for clean-up

Introduction

Start the session by asking the group if they know what our bowls and plates are usually made of. Ask if they have ever made their own items from clay. Explain that clay is a natural product that can be dug up from underground, and people have been using it for thousands of years to make ceramic vessels. The earliest known pottery in Scotland was made over 6000 years ago, during the Neolithic period ("New Stone Age").

Ask if your learners know how clay goes from being soft to hard and waterproof. Explain that it is dried out using heat: this could be in the embers of an open fire, or in a kiln. If your learners ask why some pottery is smooth and shiny, you can explain that most modern ceramics are covered with a glaze. Potters in Britain didn't use glazes until the medieval period. Prehistoric pottery was made by hand (without the wheel) and was not glazed, so it remains matte and often quite rough in texture. The earliest decorative patterns were scored, scraped or pressed into the surface of the wet clay.

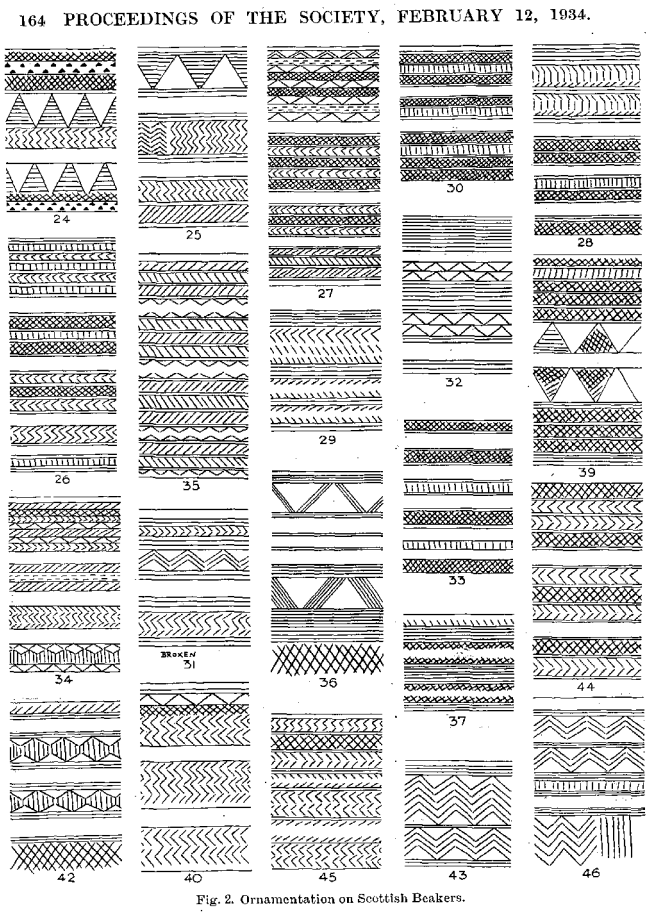


Fig. 2. Ornamentation on Scottish Beakers.

Preparatory Activities

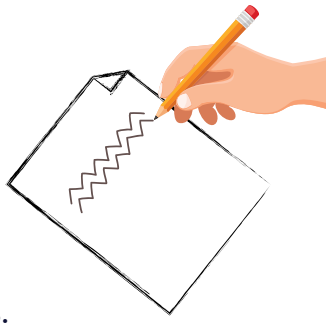
Explore Bronze Age Beakers: (15m)

Using their devices where available, your learners could research Bronze Age beakers found in the local area. Create a digital pinboard/padlet of inspirational images.

- NMS Picture Library: search "bronze age beaker" and select "only show results with images" **www.nms.ac.uk/search-our-collections**
- British Museum Images: search "bronze age beaker" and then refine the search using the "place" filter (there are 17 examples from Northumberland) **www.britishmuseum.org/collection/**

Design a Beaker: (15m)

Before starting to make the beakers, your learners may like to draw their designs. What shape will their beakers be? And how will they decorate them?



- Use the **Design Your Beaker worksheet (p.43)**.

Gather tools and objects: (10m)

You may also like to suggest that your learners gather items to decorate their beakers. Everyday items from around the classroom (LEGO bricks, small toys, wool/string, glue spreaders) or natural items from the playground (pebbles, twigs, leaves, pine cones) can be pressed into soft play to create interesting patterns. If you have clay modelling tools to hand, some may have a comb-like zig-zag shape at one end that is perfect for recreating beaker decoration designs. However, you don't really need any tools – you can even use your nails to create incised designs.

Activity

Make your own Bronze Age Beakers: (40m)

Use the instructions at **Make a Bronze Age Beaker (p39-42)**, to create individual beakers. Each beaker will be about the size of a mug or water glass, compared to the real ones, which are often closer in size to a vase.

Extension

Creative writing: Write a short story or poem from the perspective of the beaker being shaped from clay, fired, buried and then dug up by archaeologists thousands of years later.
Your learners could do some more research about how pottery was fired in the Bronze Age and, for older learners, burial practices. This may help them imagine their stories more vividly.

Ashmolean Museum page on **Bronze Age Collection: Beaker Pottery**.

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's **Guide to Early Bronze Age Beakers**.

HES leaflet on Prehistoric Burials.

Check out the **TweedWATCH Education Pack Resource Signposting Padlet** for links to all of the resources referenced.

Bronze Age Beakers

Background Notes

Beakers are a type of clay vessel, rather like a large cup, that were made during the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age. Beakers have been found all across Europe, but they were first brought to Britain from continental Europe over 4000 years ago alongside a range of other new cultural and technological developments known as 'the Beaker package'.

Beakers come in a wide range of shapes and styles. Many of them are decorated with geometric patterns that were scratched or pressed into the surface of the wet clay. Beakers were often buried alongside the dead during the Bronze Age. Analysis has shown that some of these beakers contained food or drink when they were buried: honey, flowers, cooked cereal grains (perhaps something like porridge), fruit such as blackberries, and tree sap, for example.

Some people believe these foods/drinks may have been considered special: they may have been placed in the grave as part of a specific burial ritual, or as an offering, perhaps to ensure safe passage into the afterlife.

Many beakers have a nipped in waist and a wider top. They are often quite large – around 20cm tall. One type of beaker, known as a food vessel, tends to be smaller with a narrower opening at the top. Some food vessels have little loops, or lugs, which may have been threaded with a string or cord so that the vessel could be hung up (see Heiton Mill example, below).

Examples of Beakers from the Tweed Catchment

1.

Beaker from Norham (partially reconstructed)

2.

Fig. 1. Food-vessel from Heiton Mill, Roxburghshire.

Beaker from Heiton Mill, on the banks of the Teviot, 3km from confluence with the Tweed at Kelso, found in 1932

3.

Beaker from Norham (partially reconstructed)

Make a Bronze Age Beaker

Activity Instructions

What you'll need

- Air drying clay (a 12.5kg bag will be enough for up to 30 beakers)
- Pots/cups of water
- Clay modelling tools/lollipop sticks
- Foraged items for decorating: pebbles, twigs, twine etc
- Aprons for keeping clothes clean
- Cloths/sponges and water for clean-up

Description

Pottery was made by hand in prehistoric Britain (it was made on a wheel from the Roman period onwards). This means that we can make prehistoric pottery using fairly authentic techniques, since no mechanical equipment is required. The instructions below assume that you will use air-drying clay, which is easy to handle and does not need to be fired. It can be dried slowly at room temperature (if you dry it too quickly, it will crack).

The method used is called the coil-built technique. You will make a small cup, or thumb-pot, and add more clay in coils to build up the sides.

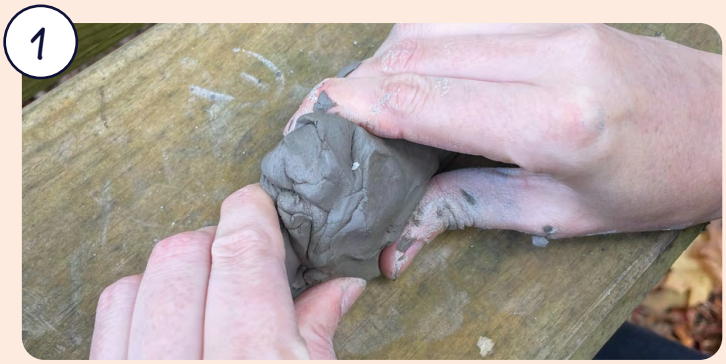
There are lots of videos online showing you how to make prehistoric-style pots. Northumberland-based potters at Potted History have a video of a beaker being made, sped up into less than 3 minutes: Making a Bronze Age Beaker (3 mins).

Examples of Beakers from the Tweed Catchment (p.38)

1. © National Museums Scotland
2. © Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, reproduced with kind permission.
3. © The Trustees of the British Museum

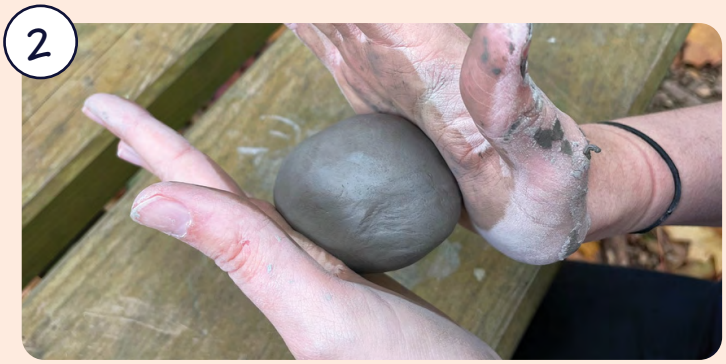
Make a Bronze Age Beaker

1



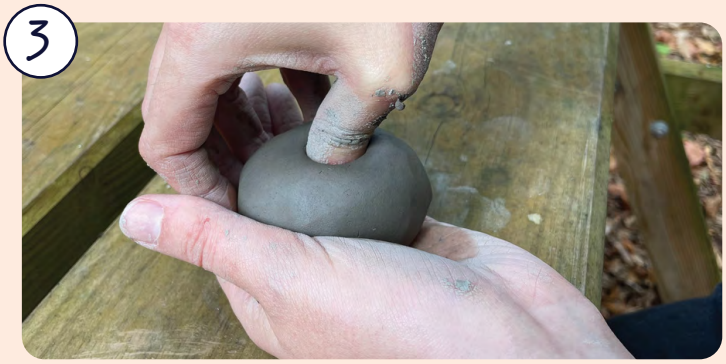
Each learner should begin with a tennis ball-sized lump of clay. Knead about half of this until it becomes soft and pliable. Leave the rest to one side for now.

2



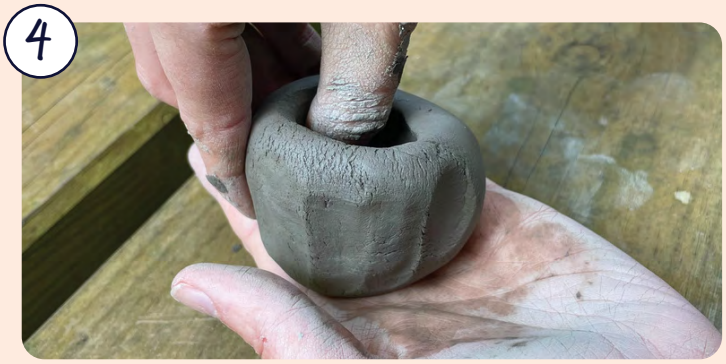
Roll the clay to form a smooth ball.

3



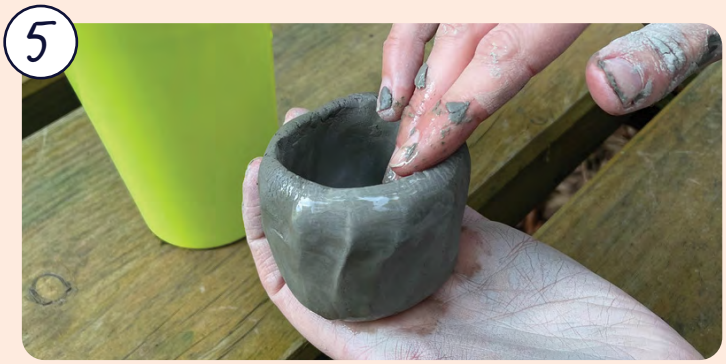
Cup the ball in one hand, and push your thumb down into it – but not all the way through!

4



With your thumb still inside the ball and your fingers long and flat, press the clay between fingers and thumb to flatten. Turn the ball round and repeat until you have created a small but sturdy cup shape. Don't let the walls get too thin – keep them about 0.75cm-1cm thick.

5



If the clay begins to dry out or crack, use a little water to smooth it out again.

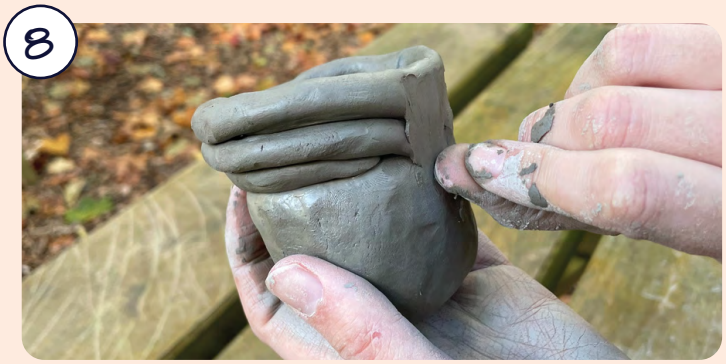
6

Take the rest of the clay and knead it until it becomes pliable. Take a small lump of clay and roll it out into long sausages no more than 1cm thick.

7

Coil the sausage on top of your little cup. To angle the profile outwards, make sure the coil rests along the outer edge of the cup.

8

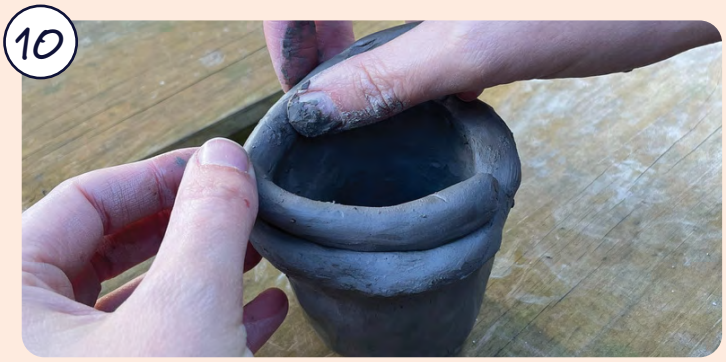


Using your thumbnail, or a tool such as a lollipop stick, smooth the coils of clay downwards to form a neat join with the cup. Add more water with the fingertips if needed.

9

Use your nail or tool to smooth the coils on the inside, too.

10

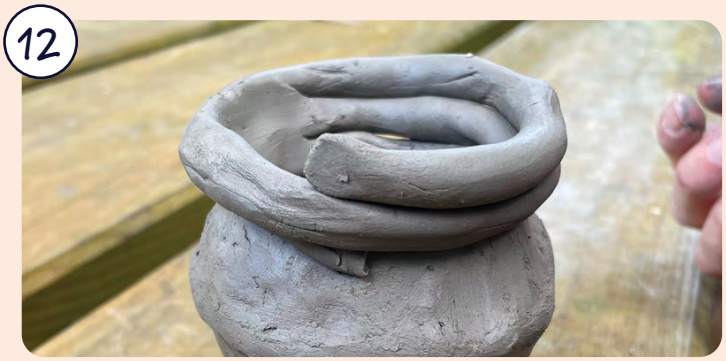


To angle the profile of your beaker inwards, add more coils on the inner edge of the top lip.

11

Smooth everything out...

12



...then add another coil to angle the profile outwards again! This creates a beaker with a nipped-in waist, though beakers come in a range of shapes.

Make a Bronze Age Beaker

13

Smooth everything out again.

14

Once your beaker is the preferred shape, it is a good idea to let it dry a little – over breaktime or lunchtime perhaps, especially if lots of water has been used.

15

Add your chosen design using tools foraged from the playground or the classroom. Beakers often had geometric patterns that repeated all the way around the pot.

16

Your beaker is complete! Leave it to dry out slowly in a cool place (it will crack if dried too quickly). Bear in mind that airdrying clay is not waterproof, so don't put liquids in the beakers. They are also great for holding pens and pencils.

Design Your Beaker

Use this worksheet to draw your beaker design.

1. What shape will it be? Some examples are provided here.
2. What pattern will you add to the surface of the clay?
   Many beakers have geometric patterns: zigzags and lines.

Heritage & Archaeology: Glossary

Archaeology	The study of ancient artefacts and buildings to learn about human life in the past.
Artefact	An object made by a human being.
Archaeologist	Someone who studies human history and prehistory to learn about life in the past.
Bronze Age	Time period during which people began to make and use items out of bronze. 2500 BCE to 800 BCE.
Iron Age	Time period when people began to make and use items out of iron. 800 BCE to 400 CE.
Neolithic	'New Stone Age', a time period when people began farming. 4100 BCE to 2500 BCE.
BCE and CE	'Before common era' and 'common era'; a way of labelling the years. The common era begins with year 0, when Christians believe that Jesus was born.

You can use this page for reference or print & cut out the rectangles for a plenary game of mix and match.

Trimontium	'The place of the three hills', a Roman fort near Melrose in the Scottish Borders.
Ritual	A special ceremony, action or activity that is important to a group of people.
Roman Iron Age	Time period during which southern Britain was part of the Roman empire, but much of northern Britain was not. 77 CE to 211 CE.
La Tène	A style of Iron Age art that features lots of swirly patterns, animals, birds, and faces.
Roundhouse	A circular building with walls made from stone, turf and/or wood, built in the Bronze Age and Iron Age.
Beaker	A decorated drinking vessel, without handles, dating from the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age.
Hoard	A collection of objects buried or put in a watery place, perhaps during ritual activity, or perhaps to hide them from others.

Curriculum Links

Curriculum for Excellence

CfE Experiences & Outcomes	Ancient Diets	River Rituals	Bronze Age Beakers
LIT 2-14a: Find, select, sort information from text sources	X		
LIT 2-15a: Making notes to understand and create new texts	X		
SOC 2-01a: Research using primary and secondary resources		X	X
SOC 2-02a: Interpret historical evidence			X
SOC 2-03a: Investigate a Scottish historical theme		X	
SOC 2-04a: Compare a past society with my own	X	X	
SOC 2-08a: Environmental impact of human activity		X	
HWB 2-30a: Contribute to a healthy eating plan	X		
EXA 2-01a: Presenting or performing for audiences		X	
EXA 2-02a: Explore a range of media to create images/objects		X	X
EXA 2-03a: Create work showing developing skill using visual elements			X
EXA 2-08a: Movement and dance		X	
EXA 2-17a: Using voice, musical instruments, and music tech		X	

National Curriculum

KS2	Ancient Diets	River Rituals	Bronze Age Beakers
HISTORY			
Changes in Britain from Stone Age to Iron Age	X	X	X
The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain	X		
DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY			
Principles of a healthy and varied diet	X		
Understanding seasonality and origins of food	X		
ENGLISH			
Understanding text through asking questions	X		
Participate in discussions, performances, and role play		X	
ART & DESIGN			
Improving mastery of art and design techniques		X	X
Learning about great artists, designers and architects in history		X	

Project Delivery Partners

Project Funders

Co-funded by the European Union

Tweed Forum: At the heart of land and water management on Tweed.

Destination Tweed: Destination Tweed is a unique project which aims to celebrate and share the nature, history and stories of the River Tweed and deliver significant economic, environmental, educational and social benefits to the South of Scotland and North Northumberland.

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