

The Iron Age

The Iron Age began at about 800 BC. It was a time when iron (a metal) was first used to make tools and weapons.

Beliefs

Iron Age swords and jewellery have been found in lakes, bogs and pits where they were left as religious gifts. Animal and human bones have also been discovered, which means that people and animals must have been killed at religious meetings.

Defence

Iron (metal) was important to making strong, powerful weapons. Iron armour, helmets and shields were much stronger than bronze ones, so soldiers wearing iron armour often won their battles.



Homes

This was a time when people usually lived in tribes (groups with a leader). These groups lived on farms, villages or bigger groups. Some people settled in big pieces of land called hillforts or places that were like towns, called oppida. Hillforts protected Iron Age groups, but they also kept their food safe, looked after their farms and were a place to buy and sell new objects. 'Oppida' was the name for places where clothes, food and weapons were made, stored and sold. They were places that had their own leaders and where important decisions were made.

Iron Age houses were made out of wood. They were circular, now called 'roundhouses'. The walls were plastered with a mixture of clay, cow dung (poo!), straw and water.

Farming and Food

Iron Age people were farmers. Metal ploughs were used so that people could collect and grow more crops. This was a time when new crops started being farmed, like wheat, barley, peas, flax and beans. Iron Age people kept cattle, sheep and pigs. The meat from the animals was kept for a long time using salt, which dried it out.

