



## The Bronze Age



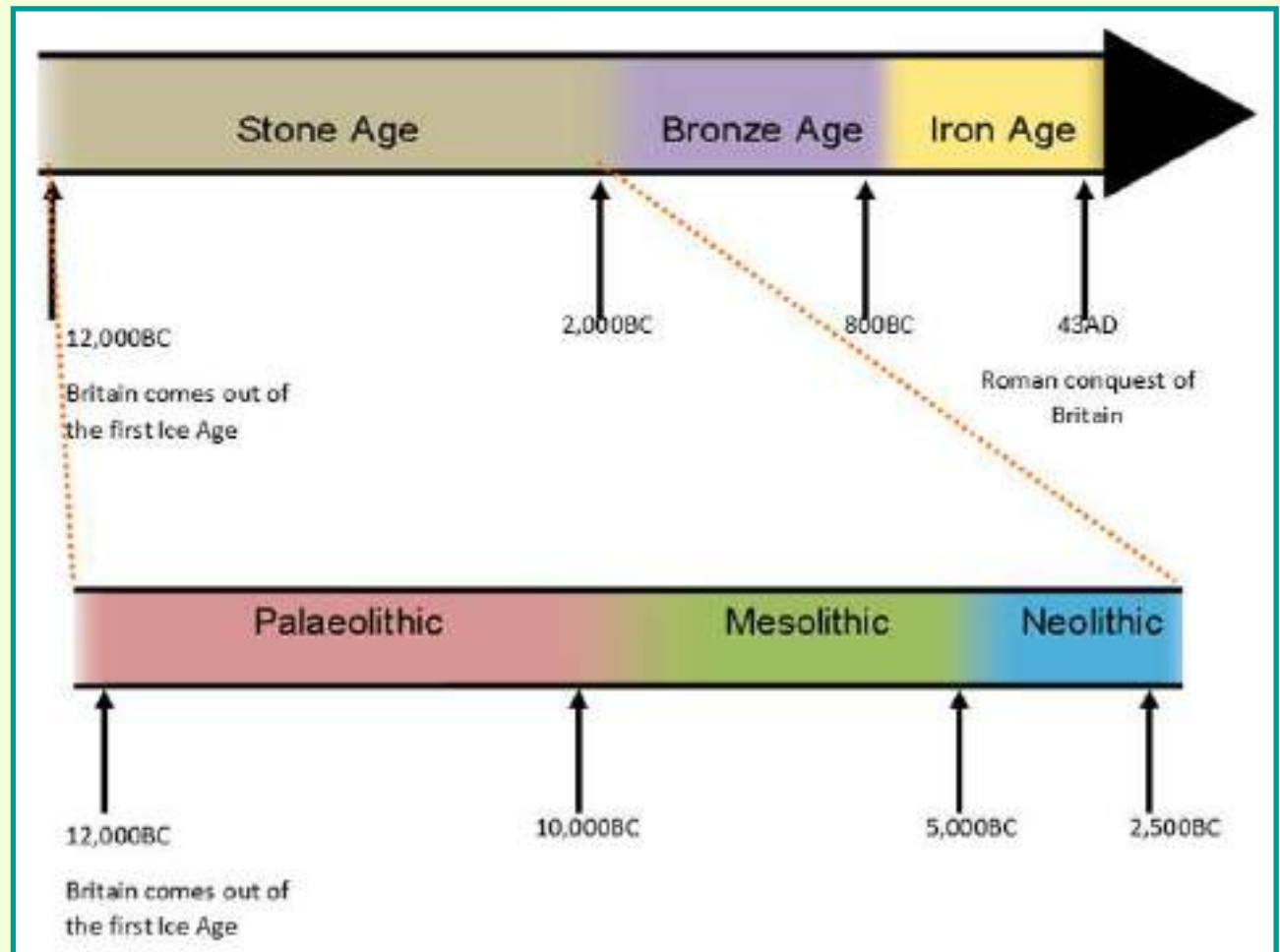
# WHAT IS PREHISTORY?

Prehistory is the period of time before the Romans arrived in AD43. In relation to the rest of our history, the prehistoric era makes up 99% of our past!

Some of the best known monuments in Britain were built during this time, including Stonehenge.

Prehistory is split into three main categories, based on developing technologies and the materials they used: Stone, Bronze and Iron.

The **Bronze Age** comes after the Stone Age, but before the Iron Age.



# THE BRONZE AGE



EARLY BRONZE AGE FLAT AXE



MIDDLE BRONZE AGE BROAD BLADED PALSTAVE



LATE BRONZE AGE SOCKETED AXE

The **Bronze Age** was the time from around 2,000BC to 700BC when people used **bronze**.

In the Stone Age, flint was shaped and used as tools and weapons, but in the Bronze Age, stone was gradually replaced by bronze. Bronze was made by melting tin and copper, and mixing them together. The bronze could then be poured in to moulds to create useful items.

Larger groups had their own bronze-smith to make their bronze tools, while everyone else had to go to a travelling bronze-smith. The travelling bronze-smiths would set up camp near a settlement and try to trade new bronze tools for old ones, food and clothes.

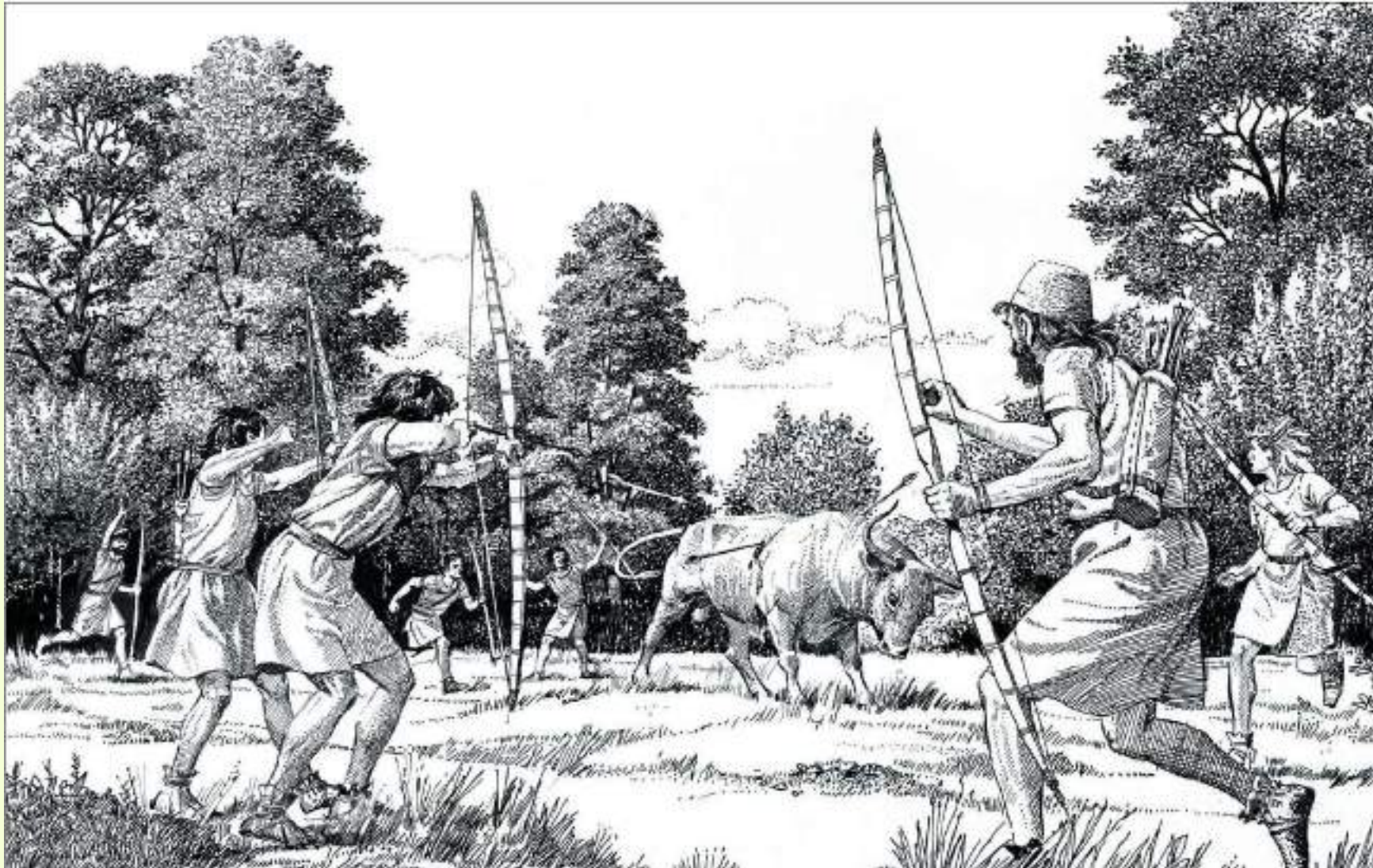


## FACT!

Although people started using bronze in the Bronze Age, they still used flint and stone tools.

# AN EARLY BRONZE AGE HUNT

A skeleton of an auroch was found at Harmondsworth with 6 Early Bronze Age arrowheads embedded in it.



# BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENTS

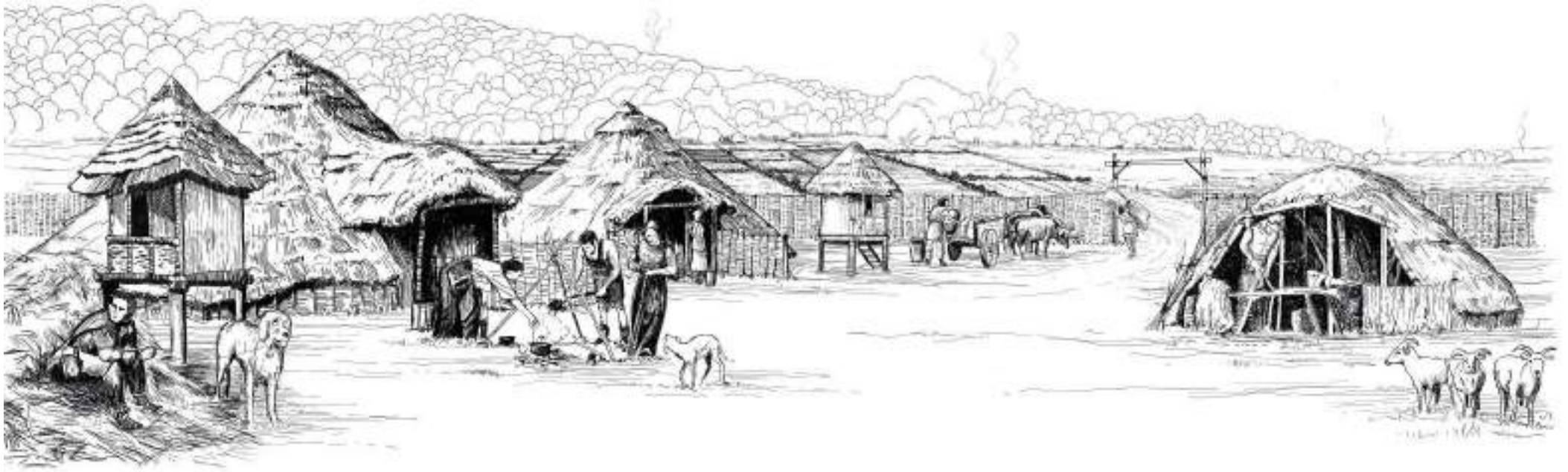
Early Bronze Age people still moved from place to place, following herds of animals that could be hunted. Later on, as people started farming, they began to settle in one place and settlements of permanent huts were constructed. Small fenced paddocks for animal pens and growing crops (mainly wheat and barley) were also built. With each season, they were able to re-sow some of the previous year's crops, so began to sustain their lifestyle. Field systems were laid out, meaning people could live in one place rather than have to travel to find food.

This plan shows cropmarks at Stanwell, overlaid on a 1999 aerial photograph. You can see a Neolithic cursus (a long narrow enclosure bounded by parallel ditches, usually with a central bank) overlain by a Bronze Age field system. The fields had trackways defined by double ditches which allowed stock and carts to pass through the fields without damaging the areas of cultivation.



# BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENTS

An artists impression of the Petters Sports Field Late Bronze Age settlement.



# A BRONZE AGE ENCLOSURE

Reconstruction of an enclosure at Carshalton. These regional centres were constructed as people settled.



Regional centres such as this one were constructed in the later Bronze Age to act as defensive sites and meeting points, but also showed the occupants had the power to order the constructions of the ditches and banks.

# BRONZE AGE ARTEFACTS

Both of these Bronze Age artefacts were found in Surrey.



A Bronze Age Barrel Urn (type of pot) found during excavations at Waitrose, Dorking in 2013



A Late Bronze Age axe from Shepperton. A bronze tip was fitted to larger wooden pieces to create a tool that could be used for clearing land and building new settlements. It is unusual to find the wooden part of axes as they do not usually survive in the ground.



# BRONZE AGE HOARDS

A hoard is something of value that has been carefully hidden away.



Archaeologists excavated a site at Cranmere School, Esher in 2013 and 2014. One of the most exciting finds was a Bronze Age hoard. The remains of a later Bronze Age pot were revealed, containing 32 fragments of copper blocks, called ingots. These types of hoards are often called smelters' or metalworkers' hoards, and usually date to the Late Bronze Age. We are not sure why this hoard was buried, it might have been to keep it safe, or as an offering to the gods or ancestors.



# BRONZE AGE HOARDS

## The Ockham Hoard

This Bronze Age [hoard](#) was found on a building site in Ockham. It consists of 2 arm rings, 2 finger rings and 6 axe heads. It has been recorded by the [Portable Antiquities Scheme](#) and dates to the Middle Bronze Age.

The arm rings are called Sussex Loops, and they are usually found around Brighton in Sussex. These are thought to be the only Sussex loops found outside Sussex.

### Find out more!

This [hoard](#) was recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme. You can find out more about it on their website by searching their database using the unique ID: SUR-B41DB6



# BRONZE AGE HOARDS

Hoard from Petters Field, Egham



A **hoard** of Late Bronze Age scrap metal found during **excavations** at Petters Sports Field, Egham. It includes axes, spears, knives and many other objects. It was probably buried by a bronzesmith.

# ACTIVITY—MAKE AN AXE HEAD

Make your own decorated socketed axe head

Socketed axes would have been used to chop down trees and clear land, as well as being used in battle. The wooden handle has usually rotted away, so the middle of the axe is hollow. They are often found by archaeologists in hoards, and as they are hollow they sometimes contain other precious objects. One socketed axe was found to contain 5 gold rings!

## You will need:

- A piece of paper or toilet roll tube
- Sticky Tape
- Different lengths of string
- Tin foil
- Glue

## Instructions

1. Roll your piece of paper into a tube and use sticky tape to secure in place (if you are using a toilet roll you do not need to do this as you already have a tube!)
2. Flatten one end and secure with sticky tape
3. Decorate your axe head using string to create patterns. Stick the string down using glue. Use pictures of axe heads that have been found for inspiration.
4. Cover your axe head in glue and carefully wrap silver foil around it to make it look like metal. Make sure you push the foil down around the string to make it really stand out.

# ACTIVITY—MAKE AN AXE HEAD

Use these pictures of decorated socketed axe heads for inspiration!



# KEY WORDS

What words have you learnt?

## Key Words

**Artefact** An artefact is an object made by a humans. Archaeologists find artefacts during excavations

**Aurochs** An extinct sort of very large wild cattle

**Bronze** A type of metal made by heating tin and copper, and mixing them together

**Bronze Age** A period of time in Prehistory that is after the Stone Age but before the Iron Age

**Excavation** A dig carried out to uncover the archaeology beneath the ground

**Hoard** something of value that has been hidden away

**Portable Antiquities Scheme** A scheme run by the British Museum and National Museum Wales to encourage the recording of archaeological objects found by members of the public in England and Wales. They record thousands of objects each year.



## Contact

If you have any feedback on this activity pack or would like to show us your finished crafts, please email our Community Archaeologist at [education.scau@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:education.scau@surreycc.gov.uk)