

Iron Age Roundhouse

A replica family home from the Iron Age (the time when people began using iron to make sharper, stronger tools and weapons).

How old is it?

It shows life from the end of the Iron Age 2,000 years ago: around 50AD, when the Romans came to Britain.

Where did it come from?

It's a reconstruction, so it's the only historic building at the Museum that wasn't rescued from somewhere else. It was built by the Museum's Buildings Team, using evidence from archaeologists. They look for clues in the ground to find out about how people used to live. This house is based on the patterns they found from really old houses, like holes from wooden posts and burned wood or earth where fires once would have been.

What is it built from?

Wood, with wattle (thin sticks and branches weaving in and out). This is then covered with daub made from a gooey mix of clay, mud, straw and dung (cow poo!). The floor is chalk and flint, and the roof thatched with wheat straw that was specially grown.

Why is it here at the Museum?

Iron Age Britons didn't read or write, but their farming and building changed what the land looked like. We wanted to show how they might have lived, and to test ideas about it using clues (this is called experimental archaeology).

Experiment

Iron needs to be heated to approximately 1,400 °C to be manipulated. To help you understand how hot this is why not try this experiment to find the melting point of different types of chocolate <https://www.stem.org.uk/resources/elibrary/resource/315591/what-temperature-does-chocolate-melt> or why not make a chocolate weapon? Follow the link for advice on welding chocolate <https://www.stem.org.uk/resources/elibrary/resource/30204/welding-chocolate>



Home Learning

Imagine

Iron Age Britons loved to tell stories, from historic tales of fearsome warriors to myths and legends about ancient gods. Why not learn the myth of Oisín and the land of eternal youth? <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-myth-of-oisín-and-the-land-of-eternal-youth-iseult-gillespie> Can you sit with your family around the fire as it gets dark outside and tell them a story just like they would have done 2000 years ago?

Create

Our Iron Age roundhouse was part of an archaeological experiment to see how Iron Age people would have lived. Can you create your own by following this link to the young archaeologists club <https://www.yac-uk.org/activity/build-a-mini-roundhouse> Don't like their design, then create your own with the materials you have. Maybe even look in the recycling bin or the garden! Why not go bigger and design your own Iron Age Hillfort?