

Cambridge Settlements

museum of **maa**
and **archaeology**
anthropology

Prehistory: Before AD 43

Palaeolithic – Old Stone Age



Palaeolithic flint hand axe



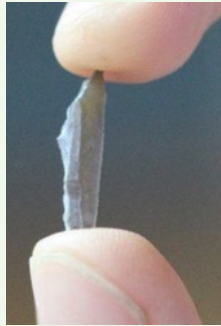
This was a time of cold temperatures. People hunted large animals such as mammoths and bison with stone axes and stone-tipped wooden spears.

Stone tools are the only evidence for Palaeolithic people in Cambridgeshire.

Mesolithic – Middle Stone Age



Antler harpoon



Flint Blade
(University of Lincoln)



Deer



Fish



Berries

During the Mesolithic people hunted smaller wild animals such as deer, wild pigs and ducks. They also caught fish and gathered berries, nuts and other edible plants. They were hunter-gatherers.

While most travelled around setting up temporary camps, some communities settled in the same place for longer periods of time, like at Star Carr in Yorkshire.

Stone tools are the main evidence for people living in Cambridgeshire during the Mesolithic.



Red Deer antler headdress from Star Carr

Neolithic – New Stone Age



Cattle



Wheat



Pottery



Flint tools and
weapons

In the Neolithic people began to keep domesticated animals such as goats and cattle. They also planted crops like wheat.

While some people still moved around, others began to settle down and build larger more permanent houses.

People started to make pottery for the first time to cook with and store food.

Some communities built monuments such as long barrows and causewayed enclosures.

Bronze Age



Cattle



Wheat



Pottery



Bronze tools and weapons

People continued raising animals and growing crops during the Bronze Age.

They also made pottery vessels, though in different styles to those made during the Neolithic.

While people still used stone and flint, they began to use bronze for the first time to make tools and weapons.

Some communities continued to build tombs and monuments.

Bronze tools and weapons, pottery and burial monuments have been found across Cambridgeshire.

Iron Age



Cattle



Wheat



Pottery



Iron tools
and weapons

People still continued to raise animals, grow crops and make pottery.

Iron replaced bronze for making tools and weapons.

Some communities, like at Wandlebury, built and lived inside hill forts with deep ditches to protect them.

Trade with Iron Age peoples in Europe grew and coins were used for the first time.

There is a lot of evidence of Iron Age communities in Cambridgeshire, from weapons to hillforts.

Romans: AD 43 – 410 AD

In AD 43 the Romans invaded Britain and settled across large parts of the country including Cambridgeshire

Duroliponte



Roman pottery and glass



Stone and lead coffin from Arbury



Gold coin



Sheep statue

In Roman times, Cambridge was just a scatter of farms and small settlements.

The Roman name for Cambridge was Duroliponte.

A Roman road linking Cambridge to Ely passed through Arbury. Excavations here in the 1950s found evidence of a Roman villa and Roman burials. One of these was of a women wearing a shroud buried in a large lead-lined stone coffin.

Evidence for Roman occupation, such as pottery and coins, can be found scattered across Cambridgeshire

Early Medieval (C.410 – 1066 AD)

Angles, Saxons and Jutes



Trumpington Cross



Pottery vessel



Brooch



Bone comb



Glass beaker

Settlers from Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands began arriving shortly after the Romans left Britain.

They established farms and communities across much of England. Cambridgeshire became part of the Kingdom of Mercia.

In Trumpington, archaeologists recently discovered evidence of a small village and a graveyard dating from this time.

In one of the graves they found the remains of a young woman who had been placed on a wooden bed. She had been buried with a gold cross inlaid with garnets along with two gold and garnet pins. Bed burials and gold crosses are very rare in Britain.

Vikings



Iron axehead



Whale bone plaque



Iron axehead

Vikings first came to Britain to raid churches and monasteries and steal precious objects.

They even made it to Cambridge.

Eventually some Vikings began to settle in parts of Britain.

Did you know it's a myth that Vikings wore helmets with large horns on top?

Medieval (1066 – 1550 AD)

Normans



Castle Hill

Photo by Robin Drayton

Two years after the Norman invasion of 1066 by a French Duke, soon to become known as William the conqueror, a timber castle was built on the site of a former Early Medieval settlement. This is now known as Castle Hill.

Later it was rebuilt in stone and at one time became the local prison.

Around 1209 scholars from Oxford arrived in Cambridge and established a university. Colleges were founded and many of the beautiful buildings we see today were built.



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