

The Bronze Age

2300–700 BC

During the Bronze Age, people started to make tools and weapons from bronze. Writing systems, such as Egyptian hieroglyphs, were created. Governments were formed and medicine and religion advanced. In Britain, people from mainland Europe crossed the sea in long, wooden boats to settle and trade.

Tools

Bronze was a harder and more durable metal than had ever been created before, so better tools and weapons could be crafted. Bronze daggers, knives, swords, spearheads, axe heads and shields were created. Chariots and armour were provided for warriors. Oxen and horses pulled carts with wheels to transport goods. Fine jewellery and luxury items were made from gold. People also developed tools that allowed them to weave wool into cloth.

Settlements

Most Bronze Age people lived on farms or in villages. As bronze tools had made farming easier, farmers expanded their fields. This meant communities began to compete with each other for land, and fighting broke out. This led to some of the first defensive settlements as people built large fences around their villages to keep enemies out. Roundhouses were common in the Bronze Age. They had a central fireplace and a roof made out of animal skins, thatch or turf. In western Asia, settlements were very different; there were cities with tens of thousands of people living there!

Monuments and art

Advanced pottery making became possible when the potter's wheel was invented in western Asia. Around 2500 BC, the 'Beaker folk' sailed to Britain from mainland Europe. When they arrived, they shared their knowledge about pottery, metals and burials. Round barrows were often used for burials. The Beaker folk held religious ceremonies at stone circles, and they helped to develop Stonehenge. They also helped to create Silbury Hill, the largest artificial mound in Europe.

