

Timeline for Ancient Britain - Stonehenge to the Celtic Iron Age Hill Forts

Paleolithic or Old Stone Age: 12,000 to 9,000 B.C.

The last Ice Age ends. Britain is connected to continental Europe, and the English Channel is a vast plain. Animals and people migrate from Europe to Britain. Hunter-gatherers, they live hunting animals, including deer, any surviving mammoths and reindeer. They build no permanent shelters but live in caves and temporary camps. Tools are crude stone spears and knives.

Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age: 9,000 – 4200 B.C.

Weather is warm and dry. Hunting continues. At around 8500 B.C. Britain separates from continental Europe, channel fills in with seawater. Decorated bones begin to appear.

Neolithic or New Stone Age: 4200 – 2200 B.C.

- 5000 B.C – 4200 B.C. – Pastoral society develops
- 4500 B.C. – Introduction of farming, pottery, stone axe heads; construction of monumental tombs, portal dolmens and megalith tombs
- 4300 B.C. – Earliest camps and long barrows
- 3600 B.C. – Stone quarrying, arrowheads, passage graves and megalith tombs.
- 3500 B.C. – Earliest henges - circular or semicircular ditches
- 2900 B.C. – Beginning of grooved ware pottery; henges become more complex involving timber and stone circles,
- 2800 B.C. – Stonehenge first phase
- 2750 B.C. – Beaker People arrive
- 2600 B.C. – Avebury and Silbury Hill are constructed

Bronze Age: 2200 – 800 B.C.

Early Bronze Age: 2200 – 1500 B.C.

- 2200 B.C. – Copper and tin mining, standing stones, ring cairns, stone circles, round barrows
- 2000 B.C. – Bronze flat axe introduced
- 2100 B.C. – Stonehenge bluestone circles are erected
- 2000 B.C. – Stonehenge sarsen circle is erected
- 1550 B.C. – Stonehenge in present form

Late Bronze Age 1500 – 800 B.C.

- 1250 B.C. – Socketed axes introduced
- 1200 B.C. – Gold mining
- 1000 B.C. – Earliest hillforts

Iron Age: 800 B.C. – 43A.D

- 750 B.C. – Hillforts
- 400 B.C. – Thrown pottery, salt trade, iron industry, standing stones
- 55 – 54 B.C. – Julius Caesar invades Britain establishes client kingdoms for trade
- 43 A.D. – Claudius sends legions into Britain, subdues all of Britain except northern Scotland