



PREHISTORY PACK

FOR TEACHERS



INTRODUCTION



This resource is designed to complement the teaching of prehistory, in particular the Stone Age, combined with a visit to Cheddar Gorge and Caves. It contains a number of activities that can be used in a variety of ways. A visit to Cheddar Gorge and Caves is rich with first hand experiences that can be enhanced by preparation and reinforced back at school.

The pack includes;

- Background information related to Cheddar Gorge and Caves and the main topics of the period.
- Suggested pre and post visit activities.
- How to make the most of a visit.

Many of the suggested activities could be used interchangeably before or after a visit. Although designed for KS2 children, many activities can be developed to use with other age groups.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you would like to get in touch to find out more please ring **01934 742343** or email education@cheddargorge.co.uk

You can also find out more information about planning a visit to Cheddar Gorge and Caves on our webpage www.cheddargorge.co.uk/education

FEEDBACK

If you would like to provide feedback, this will help us improve our resources in the future. We would like to know;

- How helpful have you found it?
- Which were the best parts or activities?
- Which were the least useful?
- Did you have any problems with it?
- If so, what were they?
- Have you any more comments or suggestions?

Please email any feedback to education@cheddargorge.co.uk

Thank you very much for your help.



TIMELINE

12,000 YEARS AGO

Red deer and wild horses were common, and were hunted by men who lived in Gough's Cave. Remains of mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, hyena, and reindeer amongst flint spearheads of human hunters, have been found in Soldier's Hole in the gorge from this period.



14,700 YEARS AGO

The first evidence for humans starting to live in the Cheddar area.



14,000 YEARS AGO

Britain emerges from the Ice Age and begins to warm up. Humans return to the land for the first time and hunt mammals such as reindeer and Arctic hare. They also make engravings of animals inside caves, some of which can still be seen in caves today. Have you seen the mammoth in Gough's Cave?

11,500 YEARS AGO

The cold, dry landscape is replaced by woodland as it gets warmer. The larger mammals are taken over by forest creatures including wild cattle and red deer. Humans hunted them with bows and arrows.



11,000 YEARS AGO

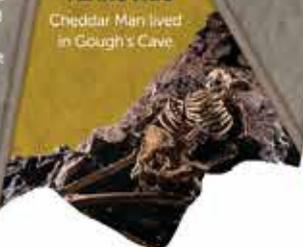
There are signs that hunter-gatherers lived in groups across Britain, and the evidence found included houses, spiritual shamanic rituals, and the oldest carpentry in Britain.

8,000 YEARS AGO

Britain finally becomes an island! As the sea levels rose the land broke off from the Continental mainland.

9,000 YEARS AGO

Cheddar Man lived in Gough's Cave



6,000 YEARS AGO

Domestic plants and animals are brought over from the Continent, and early groups of hunters' farming appear. All the same late technological advances emerge, such as handmade pottery. Pottery, mining, also begins.



5,500 YEARS AGO

New forms of ceremonial sites are constructed. Many are long rectangular enclosures known as cursus monuments. Parts of the Stonehenge Greater Cursus and the Dorset Cursus can still be seen.

Farmers found a Neolithic flint axe in Soldier's Hole, but these peoples rarely lived in the caves.

5,000 YEARS AGO

The first henges are built. The first timber and stone circles date to this period too.

4,500 YEARS AGO

Larger and more elaborate monuments are built at major ritual centres, like the Saxon Stone Circle at Stonehenge, Wiltshire. The earliest copper objects and Broken pottery date from this time.



5,700 YEARS AGO

The first monuments in Britain are built. These ceremonial tombs called long barrows appear to be used for housing, burials and for exchanging stone and flint axes.

4,000 YEARS AGO

Across Britain mounds are built out of stone or earth, marking the locations of ceremony and grave sites. Burial rituals shifted from burying human remains with beakers to cremating the dead in urns. Timber and small stone circles are still built.



3,300 YEARS AGO

Humans left ceremonial offerings of bronze objects such as swords, spearheads, daggers and pins. Metalwork is also buried in hoards or deposited in rivers.

3,500 YEARS AGO

Farming communities emerged and metal tools using copper from mines replaced flint.



2,800 YEARS AGO

Iron replaces the trade in bronze. Large settlements of people are formed and the first defended hill forts are constructed.

2,500 YEARS AGO

Somerset was densely populated and several of the caves in Cheddar Gorge were lived in.



2,000 YEARS AGO

The Romans invade Britain! Their arrival leads to the development of towns and roads. The Prehistoric Age has come to an end and a new era is dawning.

2,100 YEARS AGO

From the Continent, elite groups of people emerge with innovative machines and ideas like the potter's wheel and coinage.

2,400 YEARS AGO

A small number of developed hill forts are built with big stone walls around them.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Hunter-gatherers of the time would have roamed far and wide, following herds of animals, but evidence of this in the open landscape is almost non-existent. The great majority of finds come from caves where they were protected and thus preserved. Gough's Cave is the most important in the British Isles. The almost complete skeleton of one of these hunter-gatherers survived in the cave; this is Cheddar Man.

The further back in time we go, the less information is preserved in the archaeological record. For the periods we are discussing at Cheddar Gorge, all we have are stone tools, bones, and a few artefacts made of these and other materials. Despite this meagre evidence, modern science can tell us a great deal and theories are constantly being updated. However, it is rare to be able to say unequivocally that something is a fact.

TIME PERIODS

Prehistoric archaeological time periods are given three divisions; the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages. These divisions are very approximate and variable, depending on what area of the world is being considered and which text book you read!

We are concerned with the Stone Age, or Palaeolithic which starts when man first started to make stone tools, which was in the region of 3,500,000 years ago.

The Stone Age is divided into the Old, Middle and Late Stone Ages. The earliest evidence for human habitation in Britain is 'only' about 900,000 years ago and was by one of the many early species of human. There is evidence that humans attempted to colonise Britain, still attached to Europe at the time, many times but were driven back by deteriorating climate. The first evidence of people starting to live in the Cheddar area is about 14,700 years ago, after the ice caps covering the British Isles as far south, as the present Severn Estuary, melted. Before this, the extreme cold probably prevented animal life from surviving.

The Middle Stone Age, or Mesolithic, which in Britain started 11,000 years ago, after another short-lived period of cold, and ended around 6,000 years ago. The New Stone Age, or Neolithic, then began and is the period when agriculture and pottery manufacture started.

The ages of metal started with the Bronze Age around 4,000 years ago and the Iron Age, from around 2,800 years ago up to the Roman invasion in 43AD. Here at Cheddar Gorge and Caves, we are focused on the latter part of the Old Stone Age (The Late Upper Palaeolithic) and the Mesolithic periods.

An interesting point when studying these remote times is that stone has been the main tool material used by various human species for 99% of their existence!

WHEN DID PEOPLE COME TO CHEDDAR & HOW LONG WERE THEY HERE FOR?

The latest research into the dates of bones found in Gough's cave gives a date of 14,700 years ago, very soon after the climate improved enough for people to survive here. We know that this improvement was very rapid. It is reasonable to assume that people were following herds of animals.

Around 11,000 years ago, the climate got very cold again and it is believed that Britain became unpopulated as no artefacts or human bones have been found from that time. This cold period was relatively short-lived, about 1,000 years, and people were soon back to the start the Mesolithic Period. This is the time of Cheddar Man.

It used to be thought that Gough's Cave was used by Old Stone Age people for about 1,000 years but modern research has revealed a completely different story. The radio-carbon technique for dating organic remains has been greatly improved and is much more accurate. Many of the bones from Gough's Cave have been re-dated and a type of mathematics called Bayesian modelling applied which tells us that the cave was only inhabited for less than 200 years, perhaps two of three generations. If this is correct, it is surprising, and the reasons why such an excellent site was abandoned are a complete mystery.

WHY PEOPLE CAME TO CHEDDAR

Gough's Cave had many advantages;

- Shelter
- Fresh water
- Food resources
- Wood
- The Gorge – a migration route of animals and a natural ambush point
- A fixed reference point in the landscape – easy to find without GPS or even maps!



One resource not found locally is flint, from which so many tools were made. This was imported, and modern research has been able to locate the source as being Salisbury Plain, 70km away.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS FROM GOUGH'S CAVE



FLINT - Flint was a very useful material for Stone Age man. It is very hard and can be used to produce all manner of tools. This shaping is called 'knapping' and requires considerable skill. An extremely sharp edge can be produced which, when blunted, can be carefully knapped again to produce another sharp edge. A wide variety of cutting tools and weapons can be made. A blunt edge can also be produced to make a scraper for cleaning animals hides.

More flint has been found at Gough's Cave than any other British site, originally over 7,000 pieces but much has been lost and only 2,200 remain, a lot of which is the waste chippings, or debitage.

 **BONE** - The only bone tools to survive are awls (a sort of heavy-duty needle) made from hard tibias. Bones from prey animals are very numerous and by far the largest number were wild horses, followed by red deer. These had characteristic butchery marks made by flint tools. Another species with butchery marks was *Homo sapiens* – Man! Other species found in small numbers included ones extinct or not found here now, such as Arctic hare, beaver, wolf, brown bear and aurochs (a type of extinct ox).

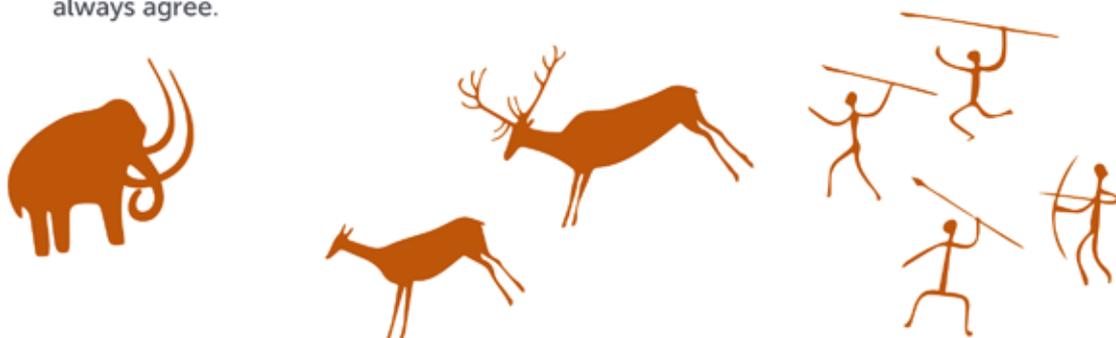
 **ANTLER** - Three rather mysterious objects called batons perces were found. They have wear marks in the hole, and were perhaps used to strip hide to make thongs, or to straighten arrows. These have a crude design of scratches on them, unlike examples found in France, beautifully decorated with engravings of animals.

CANNIBALS

Human remains were found in the 1920s and more in a scientific excavation in the late 80s. There are the remains of 5 people; an infant, two adolescents and two adults. Their bones bare the characteristics of cut-marks made by flint tools showing that they had been de-fleshed and the skullcaps had been carefully shaped to make bowls. We must be careful here; such evidence does not definitely indicate cannibalism but the balance of probability is that it was. Cannibalism is not uncommon in the archaeological record but people do not like talking about it. You can take a look at these in the museum.

CAVE ART

Art on the walls of caves is very rare in Britain and there are only engravings, no paintings are known. The only places where it has been proven to exist beyond doubt are Cresswell Crags, a number of small caves in the East Midlands, and a single example in a cave on the Gower Peninsular near Swansea. When we speak of cave art most people think of the wonderful examples found in such places as the Dordogne and the Ardeche regions of France or the Picos Mountains in the north of Spain. The artists often exhibited great skill, using the shape of the rock to give movement, understanding perspective, and painting with great confidence. Reproductions of this work can be seen in our museum. The cave art in Gough's Cave is limited to one small example – that of a mammoth in an alcove. This is controversial as some experts disagree whether it's man-made. It is a well-known fact that archaeologists don't always agree.



BEFORE YOU VISIT



HOW LONG AGO WAS THE STONE AGE?

TIMELINE ACTIVITY - Use a piece of string or length of tape to place the Stone Age period in context with historical events the children are familiar with. You can do this out in the school playground or perhaps around the classroom wall. It is important to get the proportions right as modern history is a very short time in comparison to the vast prehistorical periods.

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE?

ARCHAEOLOGY - What does an archaeologist do? An archaeologist is someone who tries to figure out what life was like in ancient past by looking at the remains of ancient people – their fossils and their artefacts. You could introduce and show them video footage and images of a dig site, or give the children access to a selection of different resources. Depending on space, you may be able to recreate a site in the classroom. The children could then work in small groups to research, then write/draw their own piece of work that answers the question 'How do we know what it was like?'

ARTEFACTS & FOSSILS - An archaeologist must know the difference between an artefact and a fossil. Fossils are the remains of living things; plants, animals and people. Artefacts are the remains of things that were made. Can the children tell the difference? Use a selection of images and ask the children to sort them.

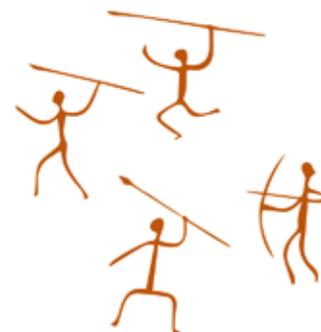
ARCHAEOLOGY DIG BOX ACTIVITY A - Split the children into several small groups. Each group can be given a dig box. Within the box is a replica Stone Age artefact that can be placed covered in sand (local authority lending services or local museum may have some you can borrow). The children can act as archaeologists and carefully uncover the artefact and study it. Ask each group to answer the following questions:

- What is the artefact?
- What is it made of?
- How do you think it was used?
- What does it tell us about life in the Stone Age?



Ask the children to choose one modern day object and then ask them to imagine they are an archaeologist discovering the object 500 years later. Ask them the following questions:

- What is the artefact?
- What is it made of?
- What might they think it was used for?
- What does it tell us about life at this time?



FOSSIL GAME - It is not easy for a fossil to form. We have included a short game at the back of the pack, the children can play with a dice and counters to illustrate this.

ARCHAEOLOGIST DIG BOX ACTIVITY B - Alternatively have a go at this activity from the BBC website:

downloads.bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory/dig_family.pdf

Can the children apply what they have learnt and show understanding about how objects/materials change? Ask the children to draw a picture of themselves as they are today and then as they would appear to an archaeologist in 1,000 years.

LANGUAGE- Go over basic words associated with the passing of time, words associated with historical research and words associated with prehistory. We have created a word search that could be used to help the children become more familiar with words and phrases associated with the Stone Age. Do the children recognise any of these words? What do they think they might mean? Can they research to find their meaning? In small groups they could create sentences that use the words in their correct context.

WHAT MIGHT LIFE HAVE BEEN LIKE?

Read stories/factual books based around this period (local authority lending services may have specific collections you can borrow). View BBC history reading list to get you started:

downloads.bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory/ancient_reading.pdf

'Cave Baby' by Julia Donaldson: This is a fun book that could be used to start discussion and lines of enquiry the children could start to think about. Are they wearing the same as us? Is their home like ours? What animals live near us? Allow the children to use their hands and sticks to create their own paintings of local animals. This could follow a mini beast or animal tracking hunt in the local area. Is this really what it would be like? Where can they find out more?

Watch BBC History: Day in the life: Stone Age video
bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory/ancient-britain.shtml

Comparison with today – Using the sheets at the end of this pack, ask the children to study the pictures carefully and think about the differences between the two pictures. Think about lighting, heating, food, comfort etc. Children should understand that life for our ancestors was very different to our own. Avoid temptation to suggest that life is better now.



VISITING CHEDDAR GORGE



GETTING TO KNOW US

We strongly encourage all teachers to visit in advance of their school. The site has a number of attractions which are best experienced for effective planning. It is also possible to talk to a guide on site about your visit. They can answer any questions you have but also make recommendations and help with planning. Health and Safety guidance notes are available to assist with completion of your risk assessment.

WHAT IS THERE TO SEE?



MUSEUM OF PREHISTORY - A visit to the museum is a must. Children will see an array of artefacts that our ancestors created and used. There are videos with re-enacted demonstrations and a number of interactive areas. You could create an activity sheet or do activities where the children search for and/or draw artefacts. Next to the museum is a small garden where a mesolithic dwelling is recreated and you can see plants that would have been around and learn how they would have been used.

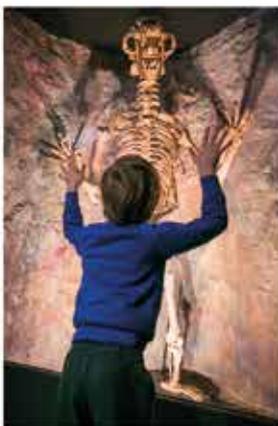


GOUGH'S CAVE TOUR - Gough's Cave is the site of significant archaeological finds including Cheddar Man. A free guided tour is available to find out how the cave formed, how it was discovered and how it has been used over the years.



JACOB'S LADDER - Climb the 274 steps of Jacob's Ladder to the top of the gorge for far reaching views from the lookout tower. What can the children see that wouldn't have been around for their ancestors?

NB If you let us know what you would like to cover and how long you will be with us, we can help plan a schedule for your day. This allows for a well organised day especially if we have other schools visiting on the same day.





PREHISTORY PACKAGE (*additional charge*) - With the help of our guides your pupils have the opportunity to find out for themselves how our ancestors lived. The activities include:

- Live demonstration by our hunter gatherer of flint knapping, how fire would be made and the opportunity to dress up.
- Activity Sheet provided for children to use in the museum.
- Focused tour of the daylight zone of Gough's Cave (you can explore the rest of the cave yourselves later in your visit).

The children can ask the hunter gatherer questions and find out information that interests them about life in the Stone Age. For more details on this, please see our web pages or contact us at education@cheddargorge.co.uk.



POST VISIT ACTIVITIES



COMPARISON WITH TODAY

- If not done before your visit you can use the picture sheets to compare life then and now.
- Set the children the task to write/draw about a day in their own life. Split the children into groups and select an activity/part of the day that they can compare (e.g. meal times, bed time, shopping, free time) with life in the Stone Age.
- Think about animals that lived then and now. What are the difference in hunting then and now? What are the consequences for the animals?

CROSS CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES



FOOD - Consider what food was available in prehistoric times. Have a go at cooking. Recipes can be found online and Time Team had a 'prehistoric feast' on one of its programmes in 2006.

- channel4.com/history/timeteam/snapshot_cooking.html
- heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?TNF1578



MATERIALS – Show photos of Stone Age tools. What do the children think they were used for? Spend some time in the school playground or local outdoor area. What materials can they collect? What can they make with them? Ask the children to talk about what their tool could be used for.



ART - Have a go at recreating cave engraving and/or painting. 'Cave Baby' by Julia Donaldson could be used as a starter to the activity.

RECORDING THEIR LEARNING



GROUP ACTIVITIES – The idea of this activity is to give the children the chance to consolidate and reflect upon all the different information they have gained during their visit. Early man had no formal written language and so events and activities are thought to have been recorded in pictures. Ask the children to think of all the things they have learnt today and at school about Stone Age man. Explain they are going to create a picture of what life would have been like. As a group, the children suggest what they need to draw e.g. fire, tools, weapons, clothing, animals etc. Once lots of ideas have been suggested, organise the children to draw the different items. Some children may do one drawing, others may do many. Stick the pictures on as they are finished to create the scene. Continue until the children have run out of ideas or the allocated time is finished.

- Ask the children individually or in small groups to create a sign for an artefact in the museum. They could then be combined as a guide to the museum. We would love to see these.
- Create a class leaflet/web page to tell others about our ancestors. What are the important things the children think should be included? What did they find interesting?
- Can the children re-enact what they have learnt as a performance for parents or as part of an assembly?

Adapt the suggestion above to incorporate the use of ICT e.g. can the children draw their pictures on tablets, can the overall image be created on the whiteboard, can they develop the picture into an animation?



INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

- Use the template in this pack and ask the children to write or draw 'At Cheddar Gorge and Caves I learnt...'
- Children could write a story from the point of view of a Stone Age child.
- Write a housing advert for a cave.
- How did our ancestors record events? Can they record their visit in cave art style?



SUSTAINABILITY

How did our ancestors care for their environment? How did they make the most of their resources and use/reuse materials? What waste did they produce? What did they do with their rubbish?

What animals lived at the time of our ancestors? How has wildlife changed? Why has it changed? How have our views on animals changed?



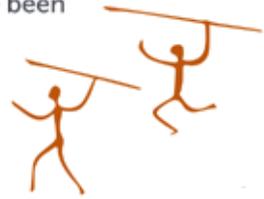
RESOURCES



Here is a range of resources that we have found out about. Some we know well, some have been recommended by others.



BOOKS



FOR YOUNGER READERS

- **Hands on History** – Charlotte Hurdman, features 15 fun projects to re-create the Stone Age, with plenty of pictures and fun facts.
- **Horrible Histories – Savage Stone Age** – Terry Deary, part of the popular Horrible Histories series, a fun way to learn about the Stone Age.
- **Caveman Dave** – Nick Sharrat, a beginners story featuring pictures and simple rhymes.
- **Little Nose series** – John Grant, follow the adventures of a Neanderthal Boy called Little Nose and his pet Mammoth Two Eyes.
- **UG** – Raymond Briggs, comic book style story of UG and his inventions.
- **Who were the first people?** – Phil Roxbee Cox, made up of short simple paragraphs accompanied with pictures.

FOR OLDER READERS

- **The History Detective Investigates: Stone Age to Iron Age** – Clare Hibbert, contains maps, paintings, artefacts and photographs to show how early Britons lived.
- **Wolf Brother (Chronicles of ancient darkness)** – Michelle Paver (Book 1 of 6), children's novel that will take you back in time to how people lived over 6,000 years ago – enter an atmospheric world of hunter gatherers, tribes and clans, mountains, forests and wild animals.

FOR ADULTS

- **In Search of Cheddar Man** – Larry Barham, Philip Priestly & Adrian Targett, this book puts Cheddar Man into a wider archaeological context and explains the scientific detective work behind the headlines which made him an international celebrity nine millennia after his death.
- **Clan of the Cave Bear (Earths Children)** – Jean Auel, historical novel about prehistoric times, which speculates on the possibilities of interaction between Neanderthals and modern Cro-Magnon humans.
- **Britain - One Million Years of the Human Story** - Rob Dinnis & Chris Stringer, this is a book that accompanies the Natural History Museum Education Gallery. It features Cheddar Man & Gough's Cave.
- **Homo Britannicus; The Incredible Story of Human Life in Britain** - Chris Stringer, this book has a dedicated chapter on Cheddar Gorge.

For more suggestions - downloads.bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory/ancient_reading.pdf



WEBSITES

- bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory/ancient-britain.shtml - lots of downloadable activities' and videos to watch as well as useful teaching resources about the Stone Age.
- bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory/archaeology.shtml - lots of downloadable activities' and videos to watch as well as useful teaching resources about archaeology.
- tes.co.uk/teaching-resources/ - search this site for ready prepared lessons, schemes of work and activities related to the Stone Age.

