
The Manx Mesolithic (8000 BC - 4000 BC)

The first people to leave traces of their existence on the Isle of Man lived during the Mesolithic (middle stone age) period, 8000 BC- 4000 BC. The Island was now separated from the English and Scottish coast and small family groups lived in camps and hunted wild game.

The climate was warmer than that of today and the dense woodland was habitat for deer, wild boar and smaller animals.

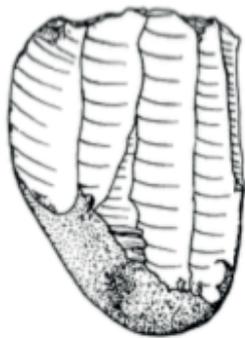
Mesolithic people would feed on animals, birds, fish and other marine life. The natural resources of the land and sea provided people with a rich diet and natural resources for fuel, shelter, clothing and tools to hunt.

Tools

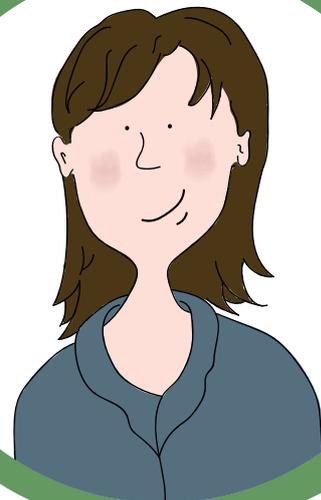
Flint Core

Flint was used to make many tools in prehistory. Flint occurs naturally on the Isle of Man and you will find flint pebbles on beaches in the North of the Island left from retreating glaciers in the Ice age. Flint tools are made by striking (knapping) the flint pebbles to break a sharp flint flake.

These flint flakes could then be 'reworked' with deer antler tools into arrows and scrapers. Heavy blades and small 'microliths' were also made this way.



Discarded flint cores are occasionally found, showing the remaining 'scar' of blades once removed.



Tools

Blade

Mesolithic flint technology was driven by the production of blades. These are essentially flakes with parallel sides. Blades are common on Mesolithic sites as are the blade cores from which they are produced. This heavy blade has been shaped to form a sharp point. The blunt base was shaped to attach to a wooden shaft and fixed in place with tree resin and leather. These were used as spears or javelins.



Find out about the Ballahasney missilehead by searching the place-name [Ballahasney](#) on the [imuseum.im](#) website.



Tools

Microlith

Microliths are small flakes or barbs, hafted (fixed) into wooden or bone shafts and used as fishing spears or arrows. The tiny harpoon-like blades, ensured fish stayed hooked. Microliths are the most recognisable item of the Mesolithic tool kit. Microliths come in different shapes and sizes and this can be helpful in allowing relative dating.

Microlithic flints have been discovered on the Isle of Man in Port St. Mary, Rushen and many other places.

