
The Manx Neolithic (4000 BC - 2000 BC)

The Neolithic (New Stone Age) period (4000 BC - 2000 BC) is marked by many changes in the way people lived. It is during this time that people learnt how to cultivate cereals and rear animals for food.

The introduction of farming resulted in settled communities that lived in tribal groups. During this time woodlands were cleared to form fields to grow crops and animal feed.

On the Isle of Man the Ronaldsway and Meayll Hill Farmers were two separate Neolithic communities. The Ronaldsway Farmers had very large ceramic pots and food vessels that may have been buried as an offering to the deceased.

Look on the website imuseum.im for the 'Ballanorris Stone Ard'. Why is this object so important to us as archaeologists? How was this object used? What does it tell us about Neolithic life on the Isle of Man?

The first farmers of the Neolithic period built great tombs, which are still visible in the Manx landscape. Go explore the sites Cashtal yn Ard and Meayll Hill.



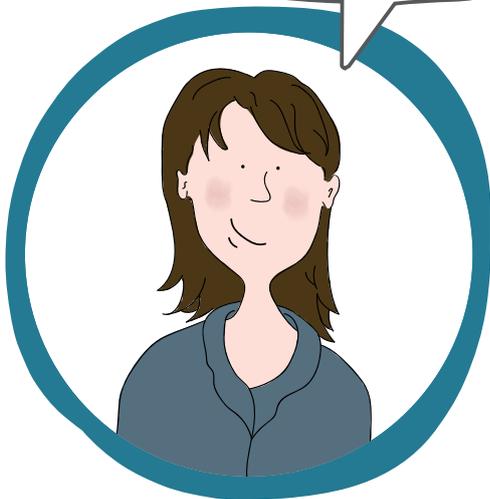
Tools

Awl

This flint awl or borer was used for piercing materials - particularly hides of leather. Notice how the outer edge of the tool is rounded to sit comfortably in the palm of the hand. Awls have retouch on alternate edges so that when they are twisted they drill a hole. They normally have a thinner cross section and were probably used to work lighter materials than piercers.



What items could be made with this tool?
Draw them below.



Tools

Axeheads

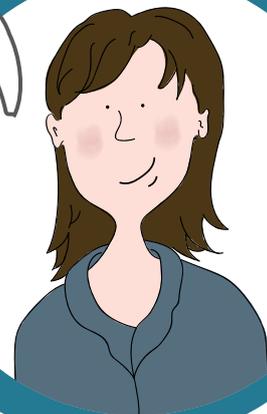
Axeheads were popular tools in Neolithic times. They could be used to chop down trees, hollow out logs and kill prey. But not all axeheads show signs of wear and tear and some are highly polished, indicating that they were never actually used!

Why do you think axeheads were so important to Neolithic people?

How do you think this axehead was used?



Search [St Michael's Isle Stone Axehead](#) on the [imuseum.im](#) website to find out more!



Tools

Arrowheads

We have many examples of arrowheads from the Neolithic period in the Manx Museum. People used these flint-knapped stones, flakes, and chips of rock as weapons and tools. Such items remained in use throughout human civilization, with additional new materials used overtime.

Archaeologists call these objects 'projectile' points, as they were projected by a bow or by some other means such as throwing by hand. The bow, arrow shaft, or spear shaft that holds the arrowheads usually rots away in the ground through time.



In Europe and further afield, archaeologists have found parts of flint arrowheads still embedded in animal bones.



Tools

Scraper

Flint scrapers could be used for many purposes from cleaning skins in leather preparation or removing the scales from fish. Notice how the bottom of the tool is flat which makes a very sharp edge. Scrapers based on long flakes or blades with retouch around the end. These tools were common in the Mesolithic and continued into the Early Neolithic. Disc scrapers are another common type. These are usually on short round flakes with retouch around both edges.

Look for flint nodules on the beach when you next visit!



The Isle of Man has pebble sized 'hump back' scrapers that date to the Neolithic. These are made of flint pebbles.

