

Stone Age



If nothing was written down before 2,000 years ago, how do we know about people like Oetzi the Iceman, who lived about 5,300 years ago? How do we know that his last meal was dried Ibex, fats, red deer and eikorn wheat? How do we know that he was shot in the back with an arrow, which hit a main artery and probably cause him to bled to death? Well, what forensics is to crime; archaeology is to the past. Archaeologists have evidence of humans living and hunting on the site of Tatton Park since 8,000BC and farming activity in the Bronze Age too. The parkland has been home to herds of deer since 1290. So, on your next visit to Tatton Park, think...maybe one of your ancestors lived or roamed these parts!

Here are a few fun activities for you to try in the classroom or at home

Activity 1: Build a survival shelter

Did Stone Age people live in caves? Well, yes, convenient, if there were caves nearby.... but what if there were no caves or trees or wood nearby to make a shelter? What about a shelter built of mammoth bones? Shame not to make the best of a good hunt after you've had a good feast on the meat and made nice warm clothing from its thick hairy fur! Do you think you could you make a den/shelter?

You might want to build a shelter in your garden, local park or a forest. Look around you and see what is available. Find one long, sturdy branch (It should be a metre or so longer than your height). Prop one end of branch up on a tree stump or log. Then lean shorter branches against the first branch. Now cover the frame with leaves, branches, or other brush.

Activity 2: Bake Stone Age Oatiejacks

Hunter gatherers didn't tend to have 3 meals a day! Often, they ate whilst they gathered, but they would bring food such as fish, bird eggs, nuts, fruits, honey raided from a bee's nest and dug up roots, back to the community to share a meal together. When food was scarce you had to think ahead and preserve the food they had caught earlier in the season: salting and smoking meat meant you didn't starve in the winter months. 90% of the food we eat today we have our ancestors to thank for.



Ingredients: 175g butter, 175g brown sugar, 300g oats and 2 tablespoons of honey. Method: preheat oven to 160 degrees C (320F). Melt the butter, brown sugar and honey in a saucepan over a low to medium heat. Remove pan from heat and add the oats and give a good stir. Cover a medium sized baking tray with parchment baking paper and put mixture into the tray with the back of a wooden spoon and bake for about 25 minutes. After removing from the oven leave to cool for 10 to 15 minutes before cutting into squares.

Activity 3: Art & Jewellery

Stone Age Britons made necklaces and bracelets from tusks, bones and shells. **Have a go at making your own jewellery by gathering materials from your local beach. Beachcombing is a relaxing activity but remember - some natural things provide food and shelter for other creatures. Taking empty shells is ok, but not if there is a live creature inside! When beachcombing, you need to be careful of the tides. Make sure that you check the weather and tide times, plus always take a mobile phone with you in case of an emergency.**

Once you have collected your finds, thread them onto some string, wool or ribbon.



Stone Age people also drew patterns on their bodies using 'paint' made from ochre - a type of red clay. Maybe you don't fancy body painting, but why not try a bit of cave painting? Cave paintings of giant bulls, stags, horses, bison and birds told us a story of the type of animals that were around at that time and the food they were hunting.

Grind red/yellow coloured chalk into powder and mix with a little olive/sunflower oil to create a 'paint' consistency. Put your hand flat on a blank piece of paper and then use a paintbrush dipped in your paint to 'stipple' around the outline of your hand to create your own cave painting. If you feel confident, draw free hand a woolly mammoth or bison and then decorate the inside of the shape with your paintbrush.

TOP TIP – If you make your painting on fine sandpaper, the texture of your painting will feel like the inside of a cave!

