

Speculate

Populating a Bronze Age enclosure.

It is believed that one or more families lived in each Bronze Age farmstead. Inside a wooden fence or palisade there were houses, storage huts and pens or enclosures for the livestock. Outside the palisade there were fields in which crops such as wheat and barley were grown.

(Adapted from *Discovering the Bronze Age*. The Discovery Programme, 1997.)

Use the archaeological evidence given on the next page to populate the livestock pens (page 105) with animals that are most likely to have been kept there during the Bronze Age. Write the names of the animals inside the pens (page 106).

A. Can you tell which animals might have been there in the greatest numbers? Put them in the largest pens.

B. There is a fulacht fiadh where food was cooked. What animals might have been cooked in the fulacht fiadh? Write the names of the animals inside the fulacht fiadh.

C. The enclosure is surrounded by a wooden fence to protect the family and its animals. What animals might have posed a threat to their safety? Write the names of the animals outside the fence.

Research

Archaeological Evidence

DOGS

At Chancellorsland in Co. Tipperary, the bones of a small dog (about the size of a sheepdog) were found. Dogs were probably used to help people to hunt from the time the first settlers came to Ireland.

SHEEP

Bones found at Dún Aonghusa on the Aran Islands indicate that sheep were one of the most important animals kept there.

WILD BOAR

Wild boar was hunted in Ireland from the Mesolithic period (Middle Stone Age) when, according to the evidence available, the first people arrived. In an excavation at Rathinaun, Co. Sligo, a wooden box was discovered containing bronze objects as well as amber beads and a boar's tusks. Some sources say they may have been extinct by the end of the Iron Age.

GOATS

Goats were brought to Ireland by the first farmers during the Neolithic period. Small amounts of bone have been found at several Bronze Age sites including the Bronze Age site at Newgrange, Co. Meath.

PIGS

There is evidence that pigs were kept near forest areas where they could forage for food. Pig bones were the second largest group of bones found at a Bronze Age site at Newgrange, Co. Meath.

HORSES

Horses became extinct in Ireland during the Ice Age and had to be introduced by man during the Bronze Age. Evidence of domesticated horses is rare, though cremated horse bones were found at a Bronze Age site at Newgrange, Co. Meath and horse bones at Ballyveelish, Co. Tipperary.

CATTLE

At most Bronze Age sites, there is evidence of the keeping of cattle. At a Bronze Age site at Newgrange, Co. Meath, cattle bones outnumbered all other animal remains found. Animal bones discovered in an excavation at Ballyveelish, Co. Tipperary, show that cattle were the most important livestock there.

DEER

There is limited evidence of the hunting of deer during the Bronze Age. At Ballinderry, Co. Offaly, a few bones of wild animals such as red deer were found.

HARE

Finds of food debris show that wild hare was hunted and eaten in Ireland from as early as the Mesolithic period (Middle Stone Age).

WILD CAT

Evidence from the Kilgreaney cave in Co. Waterford and Newgrange, Co. Meath shows that wild cats such as the lynx roamed the Irish countryside during the Stone Age and Bronze Age.

WOLVES

Bone fragments found in quarry works outside Dungarvan in the nineteenth century confirm that wolves were roaming the country during the Ice Age, before the first people came to Ireland. They were a common feature of the Irish landscape for thousands of years. The last Irish wolf is thought to have been killed towards the end of the eighteenth century.

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