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LEARNING COMPANION 2

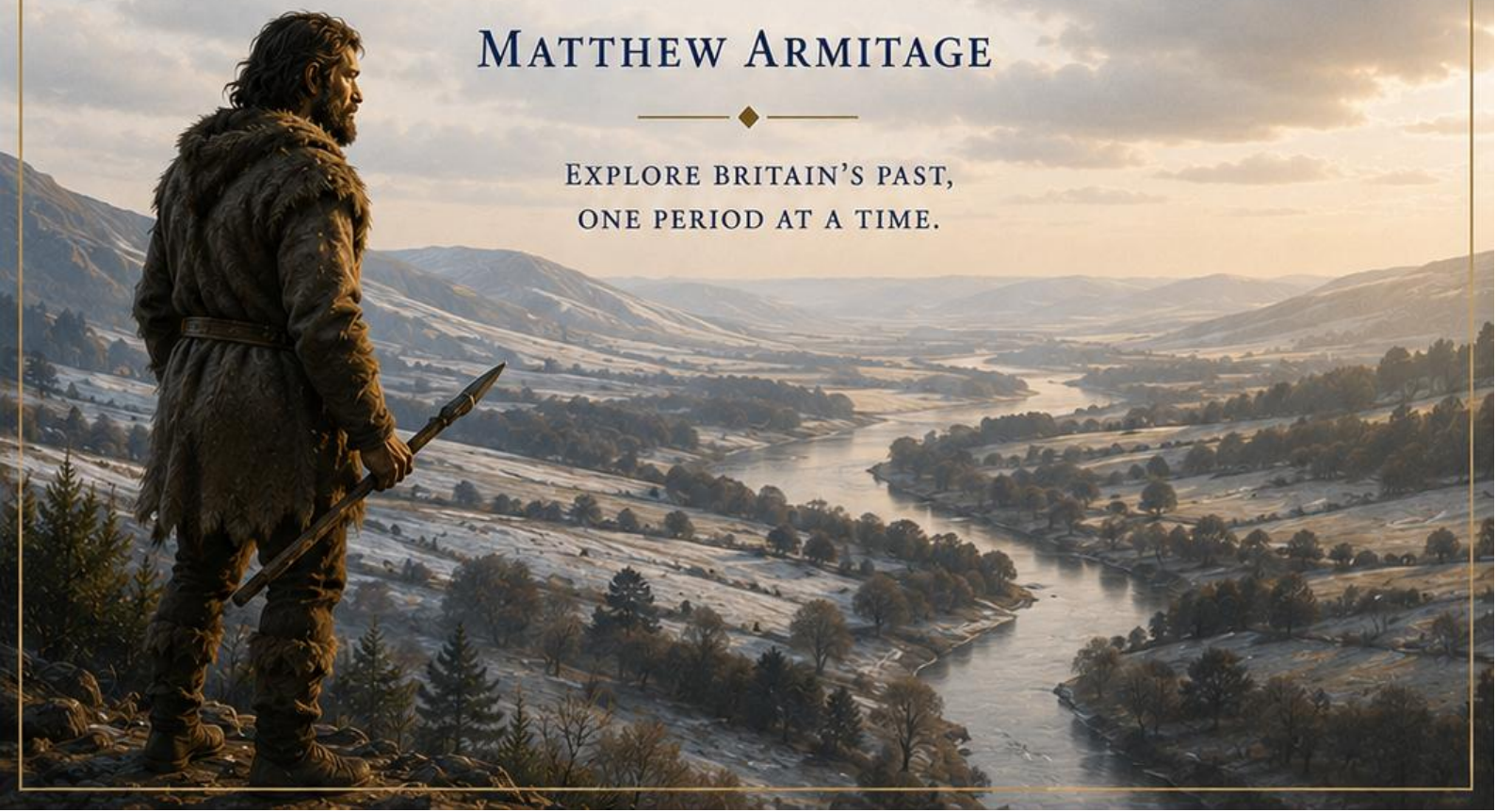
THE MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC

Neanderthals and Ice Age Britain

An educational guide exploring the human story of Britain during the *Middle Palaeolithic*

MATTHEW ARMITAGE

EXPLORE BRITAIN'S PAST,
ONE PERIOD AT A TIME.



Before England Learning Companion 2

The Middle Palaeolithic:

Neanderthals and Ice Age Britain

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Matthew Armitage has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work.

Part of the Before England Learning Companion series.

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Welcome to the Before England Learning Companion

Welcome to **Before England Learning Companion 2: The Middle Palaeolithic**.

This guide explores one of the most remarkable periods in Britain's distant past, when Neanderthals lived in landscapes repeatedly transformed by climate. Between around 300,000 and 40,000 years ago, these highly skilled human relatives entered Britain during favourable conditions before disappearing again as the landscape became too hostile. Their story was not one of continuous occupation, but of repeated return across an immense span of time..

Each Before England Learning Companion explores the archaeological evidence behind one period of Britain's past. Rather than presenting a complete history, each guide explains how archaeologists reconstruct the lives, landscapes and discoveries that define that period through scientific investigation and archaeological evidence. It explains what archaeologists have discovered, how these discoveries have changed our understanding of Neanderthals, and why the Middle Palaeolithic remains one of the most important chapters in human history.

Throughout this guide you will discover famous archaeological sites, remarkable artefacts, changing landscapes and the scientific techniques that allow us to reconstruct a world that disappeared tens of thousands of years ago. You will also find timelines, maps, fact boxes, photographs and questions designed to encourage you to think like an archaeologist.

Whether you are studying archaeology, supporting schoolwork or simply fascinated by Britain's ancient past, this companion will help you understand how evidence allows us to explore the lives of Neanderthals and the changing landscapes they once called home.

Every discovery begins with evidence, and every piece of evidence helps us understand Britain's story a little better.



Flint handaxe. Image: Portable Antiquities Scheme, FindID 220697.

Period at a Glance

Time Period

c. 300,000-40,000 years ago

Human Species

Neanderthals (*Homo neanderthalensis*)

Climate

Alternating warm and cold periods during the Ice Age. Britain was occupied during milder climates and abandoned when conditions became too severe.

Landscape

Open grasslands, river valleys, woodland, caves and rocky shelters. Britain remained connected to mainland Europe for much of this period by the land now known as Doggerland.

Tools

Prepared flake tools made using the Levallois technique, together with scrapers, points and knives used for hunting and processing animal skins and meat.

Food

Large mammals including mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, horse, red deer, bison and reindeer, together with smaller animals and seasonal plant foods.

Homes

Temporary camps in caves, rock shelters and open-air sites, often close to rivers or where animals regularly gathered.

Important Sites

Pontnewydd Cave, Lynford Quarry, Creswell Crags and Kent's Cavern..

Evidence We Find Today

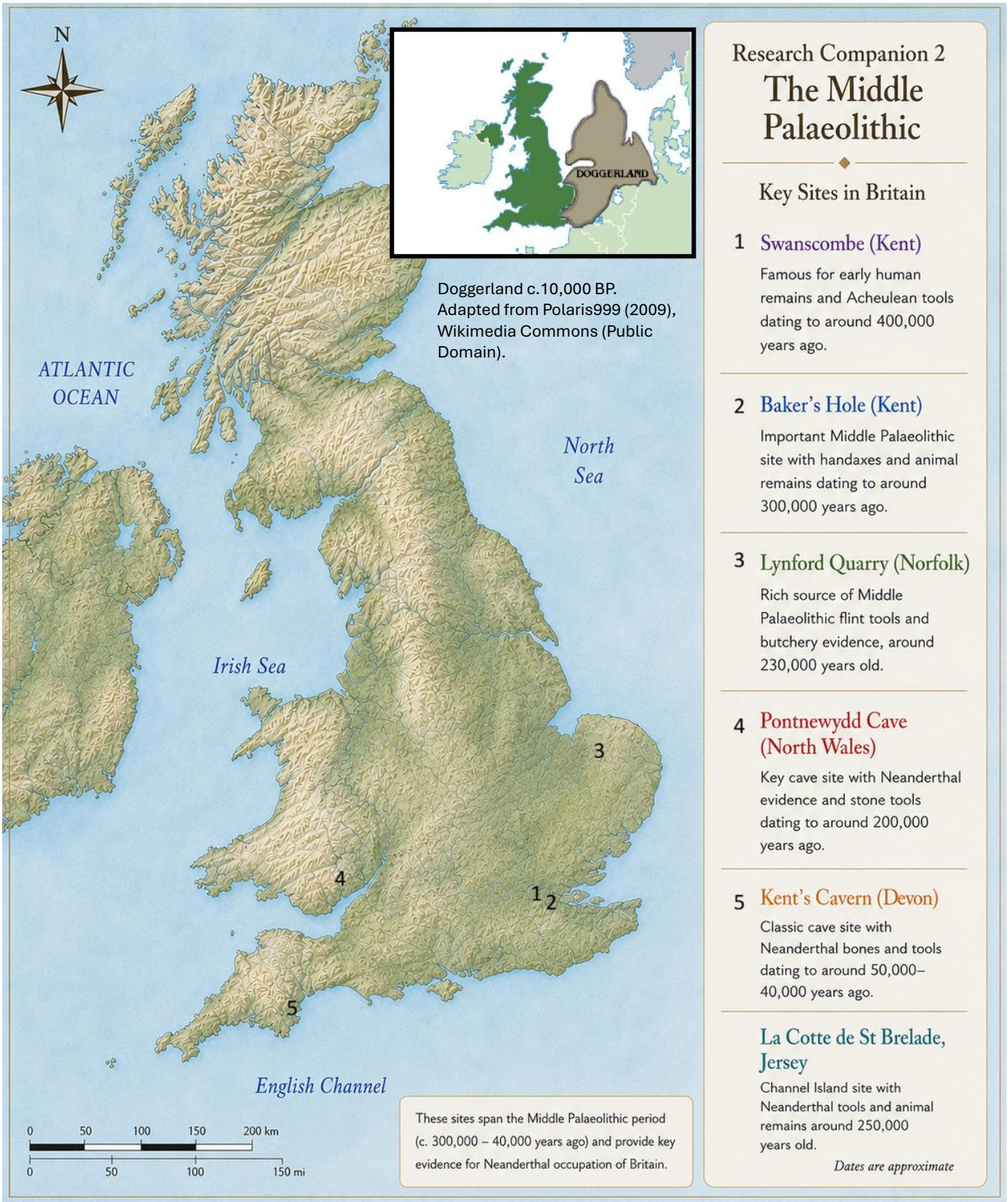
Stone tools, animal bones, hearths, cave deposits, pollen, sediments and rare Neanderthal fossil remains.

Why It Matters

The Middle Palaeolithic shows that Neanderthals were intelligent, adaptable people who successfully survived some of the harshest environments ever inhabited in Britain. Their discoveries continue to transform our understanding of human evolution and life during the Ice Age.

Middle Palaeolithic Britain

The Middle Palaeolithic landscape looked very different from Britain today. During much of this period, lower sea levels connected Britain to mainland Europe by a vast area of dry land now beneath the North Sea. This lost landscape, known as Doggerland, allowed Neanderthals and the animals they hunted to move freely across northern Europe.



Doggerland c.10,000 BP. Adapted from Polaris999 (2009), Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain).

What Was This Period?

The Middle Palaeolithic was a time when Britain was repeatedly occupied by Neanderthals, a human species closely related to our own. They lived here at intervals between about 300,000 and 40,000 years ago, entering when climate and geography allowed before disappearing again as conditions deteriorated. At times, Britain may have remained without people for tens of thousands of years.

The landscape itself changed profoundly. Sea levels rose and fell, rivers altered their courses and habitats shifted as colder glacial periods gave way to warmer interglacials. During periods of lower sea level, extensive areas of land were exposed across parts of what is now the North Sea, connecting Britain to the wider European landscape and allowing people and animals to move between them.

Neanderthals were intelligent and highly adaptable. They hunted large mammals, controlled fire, made sophisticated stone tools and understood how to survive in challenging environments. For many years they were thought to be primitive, but archaeological discoveries have revealed a very different picture. Evidence now shows they cared for injured members of their groups, planned hunts, selected high-quality stone for tool making and adapted successfully to changing climates over hundreds of thousands of years.

Their stone tools are among the defining features of the Middle Palaeolithic. Using prepared-core techniques, particularly the Levallois method, Neanderthals carefully shaped stone cores so that flakes of predictable size and shape could be removed. These flakes were then turned into scrapers, points and cutting tools used for butchering animals, working hides and shaping wood. This technology required planning and skill, demonstrating that Neanderthals thought several steps ahead when making the tools they depended upon for survival.

Archaeological evidence also suggests that Neanderthals were highly mobile. Rather than living permanently in one place, they probably travelled across large territories following migrating animals and taking advantage of seasonal resources. Camps may have been occupied for only short periods before groups moved on, leaving behind stone tools, butchered animal bones and traces of hearths. These scattered discoveries allow archaeologists to reconstruct patterns of movement and behaviour across ancient landscapes.

The Middle Palaeolithic was not a single unchanging period. Colder glacial periods and warmer interglacials repeatedly transformed the landscape, affecting the animals that lived here and determining when Neanderthals could return. Their presence in Britain was therefore never permanent. Each occupation formed another chapter in a much longer history of people entering, leaving and returning as the landscape changed around them.

Although Neanderthals eventually disappeared around 40,000 years ago, their legacy survives in the archaeological record. Stone tools, animal bones, cave deposits and rare human remains continue to help archaeologists understand how they lived and how they adapted to one of the most demanding environments in prehistoric Europe.

Did You Know?

Neanderthals were not our ancestors, but our close relatives. Modern scientific research has shown that many people living today still carry a small amount of Neanderthal DNA inherited from ancestors who met and interbred with them thousands of years ago.

Who Were the Neanderthals?

Neanderthals (*Homo neanderthalensis*) were a human species that lived across Europe and parts of western Asia for hundreds of thousands of years. They were the only humans to occupy Britain during the Middle Palaeolithic and were well adapted to life in Ice Age environments.

They were generally shorter and more strongly built than modern humans. Their broad chests, powerful limbs and large noses helped them cope with cold climates, while their skill in making tools, controlling fire and hunting large animals allowed them to survive in challenging landscapes.

For much of the twentieth century, Neanderthals were often portrayed as primitive. Archaeological discoveries have transformed this view. Evidence now shows that they were skilled toolmakers, successful hunters and adaptable people who responded to changing climates over many thousands of years.

Recent scientific research has revealed that Neanderthals possessed large brains comparable in size to those of modern humans. They communicated with one another, passed on knowledge and skills, and almost certainly had complex social relationships within their family groups. Evidence from archaeological sites across Europe suggests they cared for injured or elderly individuals, indicating cooperation and compassion. Some sites also hint at symbolic behaviour, including the possible use of pigments, personal ornaments and the deliberate placement of the dead, although these discoveries continue to be debated by archaeologists.

In Britain, Neanderthals hunted animals such as horse, red deer and bison, and probably returned to favourable hunting grounds whenever conditions allowed. They were expert hunters who worked together to bring down large prey, using carefully made wooden spears tipped with sharp stone points. Fire provided warmth, protection and a means of cooking food, allowing them to survive even during colder periods.

Stone tools, animal bones and rare fossil remains continue to provide valuable evidence about their lives. Every new archaeological discovery helps build a more complete picture of how Neanderthals lived, travelled and adapted to changing environments.

Around 40,000 years ago, Neanderthals disappeared from Europe. The reasons remain uncertain, but climate change, small populations and the arrival of modern humans may all have contributed. Today, archaeology continues to reshape our understanding of these remarkable people.

Did You Know?

The average Neanderthal brain was at least as large as that of a modern human. Intelligence is not measured simply by brain size, but this reminds us that Neanderthals were capable people who survived in challenging Ice Age environments for hundreds of thousands of years.

How Do We Know?

Neanderthals left no written records, so everything we know about them comes from archaeology and scientific research. Every discovery adds another piece to the story, helping archaeologists understand how Neanderthals lived, hunted and adapted to changing environments.

The most common evidence is stone tools. Thousands of carefully shaped flint flakes, scrapers and points have been found across Britain. By studying how these tools were made and used, archaeologists can learn about hunting, butchery, woodworking and other everyday activities. Different styles of tools also help identify particular periods of the Middle Palaeolithic.

Animal bones provide another important source of evidence. Cut marks left by stone tools show where Neanderthals removed meat or broke bones to extract nutritious marrow. Burnt bones can indicate the use of fire, while the types of animals found at a site reveal the environment and climate at the time.

Although Neanderthal fossils are rare in Britain, a small number of important discoveries have been made. Teeth from Pontnewydd Cave in North Wales and other human remains found elsewhere help archaeologists understand the appearance, health and development of Britain's Neanderthal populations.

Many discoveries come from **caves**, where sediments have protected archaeological deposits for thousands of years. Open-air sites such as Lynford Quarry preserve evidence buried beneath river sediments and other natural deposits. These sites often contain stone tools, animal bones and traces of ancient landscapes.

Scientists also study pollen, sediments and animal remains to reconstruct the world in which Neanderthals lived. These environmental clues reveal whether the landscape was open grassland, woodland or tundra, helping archaeologists understand how changing climates affected human occupation.

Modern scientific techniques continue to improve our understanding. Radiometric dating establishes the age of archaeological deposits, while microscopic analysis can identify tiny traces of wear on stone tools, revealing how they were used. DNA recovered from Neanderthal fossils found elsewhere in Europe has also transformed our understanding of their relationship with modern humans.

Every new discovery helps answer old questions while raising new ones. Archaeology is constantly developing, and our understanding of Neanderthals continues to change as fresh evidence is uncovered.

Did You Know?

Some stone tools still preserve microscopic traces of the materials they were used to cut. By examining these tiny wear marks under powerful microscopes, archaeologists can discover whether a tool was used on meat, wood, bone or animal hides.

MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC TIMELINE

NEANDERTHALS IN BRITAIN

c. 300,000 years ago	Neanderthals become established across much of Europe. During warmer periods they move into Britain, which remains connected to mainland Europe by the land now known as Doggerland.
c. 250,000–230,000 years ago	Neanderthals occupy Pontnewydd Cave in North Wales. Stone tools and human teeth found here provide some of the earliest direct evidence for Neanderthals in Britain.
c. 200,000–130,000 years ago	Britain experiences repeated warm and cold climates. Neanderthal groups enter the country during favourable conditions before leaving again as colder periods return.
c. 130,000 years ago	A warm interglacial creates woodland, rivers and abundant wildlife across southern Britain. Neanderthals take advantage of these rich environments.
c. 70,000–60,000 years ago	As the climate cools once more, Britain becomes a landscape of open grasslands and tundra. Mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, bison and reindeer roam the countryside.
c. 60,000 years ago	Neanderthals occupy sites such as Lynford Quarry in Norfolk, where stone tools and butchered animal bones reveal organised hunting and skilled tool making.
c. 50,000–45,000 years ago	Neanderthals continue to move between Britain and mainland Europe as climate and sea levels change. Occupation remains temporary rather than permanent.
c. 40,000 years ago	Neanderthals disappear from Europe. The reasons remain uncertain, but changing climates, small populations and the arrival of modern humans probably all played a part.

WHY THE TIMELINE MATTERS

The Middle Palaeolithic was not a continuous period of occupation. Neanderthals entered Britain when the climate was suitable and left when conditions became too harsh. Their story is therefore one of repeated return, remarkable adaptation and survival within an ever-changing Ice Age landscape.

Archaeological discoveries from caves, river valleys and ancient hunting grounds allow us to reconstruct this long chapter of Britain's human history.

The Main Discoveries

The Middle Palaeolithic is known through a small number of remarkable archaeological sites. Each has contributed important evidence about Neanderthal life in Britain, helping archaeologists understand where people lived, how they hunted and how they adapted to changing Ice Age environments.

Pontnewydd Cave, North Wales

Pontnewydd Cave contains Britain's earliest direct evidence for Neanderthals. Excavations uncovered stone tools together with several Neanderthal teeth dating to around 230,000 years ago. These remains show that Neanderthals occupied Britain during warmer periods of the Ice Age.

Evidence found**:** Neanderthal teeth, stone tools and animal bones.

Lynford Quarry, Norfolk

Lynford Quarry has produced one of Britain's richest Middle Palaeolithic sites. Hundreds of flint tools were discovered alongside the butchered bones of mammoth, woolly rhinoceros and other Ice Age animals. The site demonstrates the skill of Neanderthal hunters and toolmakers.

Evidence found: Levallois flint tools, butchered mammoth bones and other animal remains.

Creswell Crags

The caves at Creswell Crags preserve evidence from many periods of prehistory, including Neanderthal occupation during the Middle Palaeolithic. Stone tools found here show that Neanderthals used the caves while hunting across the surrounding landscape.

Evidence found: Stone tools, animal bones and cave deposits.

Kent's Cavern, Devon

Kent's Cavern preserves evidence of repeated human occupation over hundreds of thousands of years. Middle Palaeolithic stone tools demonstrate that Neanderthals reached south-west Britain during favourable climatic conditions.

Evidence found: Middle Palaeolithic flint tools and animal remains.

Why These Sites Matter

Each site preserves a different part of the story. Together they show that Neanderthals repeatedly occupied Britain, adapting to changing climates over thousands of years. Every new discovery helps archaeologists build a clearer picture of life during the Middle Palaeolithic and reminds us that our understanding of the past continues to grow.

Did You Know?

Many of Britain's most important Neanderthal discoveries were made during quarrying and construction work. Without archaeological investigation, much of this evidence might have been lost forever.

Climate and Environment

The Middle Palaeolithic took place during the Pleistocene, the geological epoch that lasted from around 2.58 million to 11,700 years ago. It was marked by repeated changes between colder glacial periods and warmer interglacials, which transformed Britain's landscape many times.

During warmer periods, woodland spread across parts of Britain and animals moved northwards into newly habitable landscapes. As temperatures fell, forests retreated and open tundra or cold grassland expanded. During the coldest phases, great ice sheets covered large areas and Britain could become too hostile for human occupation.

Sea levels also changed as water became locked within expanding ice sheets and was later released as they melted. During periods of lower sea level, extensive areas of land were exposed across what is now the North Sea, connecting Britain with continental Europe and allowing people and animals to move through a much wider landscape.

Neanderthals did not simply live through one unchanging Ice Age environment. Over thousands of generations, they experienced landscapes repeatedly transformed by changing climate. Rivers shifted and habitats altered, while familiar hunting grounds could disappear. At times, Britain was abandoned completely before Neanderthal populations returned when conditions once again allowed.

Archaeologists reconstruct these environments by studying evidence preserved in ancient sediments. Pollen reveals the vegetation that once grew nearby, while fossil insects and animal remains provide evidence about temperature and local habitats. These discoveries help explain not only what the landscape looked like, but why Neanderthals repeatedly appeared and disappeared from Britain.

The Middle Palaeolithic is therefore not a story of continuous occupation. It is a story of repeated return to a landscape that was itself continually changing.

Did You Know?

During some of the coldest parts of the Middle Palaeolithic, glaciers covered much of northern Britain. Southern Britain remained ice-free, but the climate was still much colder than it is today, with open grasslands stretching across the landscape.

Everyday Life

Life for Neanderthals was shaped by the changing seasons and the demands of surviving in an Ice Age world. Rather than living in permanent villages, they travelled in small family groups, moving to places where food, water and good hunting opportunities could be found. During warmer periods, Britain offered rich grasslands, river valleys and woodland filled with animals, while colder times forced people to move or adapt to harsher conditions.

Most days involved practical tasks essential for survival. Adults made and repaired stone tools, prepared animal hides, collected firewood and searched for suitable stone for new tools. Hunting required planning, patience and teamwork. Once an animal had been killed, almost every part was used. Meat provided food, while hides became clothing or shelter.

Fire was at the centre of everyday life. It provided warmth, light, protection from predators and a place where food could be cooked and shared. Around the fire, knowledge and practical skills were almost certainly passed from one generation to the next.

Although no written records survive, archaeology shows that Neanderthals were resourceful, intelligent people whose lives depended on cooperation, careful planning and a detailed understanding of Britain's ever-changing Ice Age landscapes.

Did You Know?
Some Neanderthal skeletons show healed broken bones and other serious injuries. These individuals could only have survived because other members of their group cared for them while they recovered.

Technology and Innovation

One of the greatest achievements of the Middle Palaeolithic was the development of increasingly sophisticated stone tool technology. Neanderthals carefully selected suitable flint and shaped it into tools designed for specific tasks.

The most important innovation was the Levallois technique. Instead of striking flakes from a stone core at random, Neanderthals first prepared the core before removing flakes of a planned size and shape. This required skill, planning and an understanding of how stone fractured.

Different tools were used for different jobs. Sharp flakes cut meat, scrapers prepared animal hides and pointed tools may have been fitted to wooden shafts to make hunting spears. Archaeologists can often identify how these tools were used by studying microscopic wear marks left on their edges.

Although very little wood has survived, it was probably used to make spears, digging sticks and other equipment. Fire was equally important, providing warmth, light and a way to cook food during the cold conditions of the Ice Age.

The quality of these tools demonstrates that Neanderthals were skilled craftspeople who developed technologies that helped them survive in challenging environments.

Did You Know?
The Levallois technique was so advanced that a skilled Neanderthal could predict the size and shape of a stone flake before striking it from the core. This level of planning shows that tool making was a carefully learned skill rather than a matter of chance.

People and Society

Neanderthals lived in small, close-knit groups where cooperation was essential for survival. Life in Ice Age Britain was demanding, and no individual could easily survive alone. Hunting large animals, gathering food, caring for children and maintaining fires all required people to work together. These family groups probably travelled across the landscape, returning to familiar places when conditions were favourable and moving on when resources became scarce.

Evidence from archaeological sites across Europe shows that Neanderthals cared for one another. Some individuals survived serious injuries, broken bones and illnesses that would have made hunting impossible for long periods. Their survival suggests that other members of the group provided food, protection and support while they recovered. This level of care reflects strong social bonds and cooperation.

Knowledge was also shared between generations. Young Neanderthals learned how to make stone tools, use fire, identify useful plants and hunt animals by watching and practising alongside experienced adults. The remarkable consistency of stone tool traditions over thousands of years shows that these skills were carefully passed on.

Although much about Neanderthal society remains unknown, archaeologists believe they formed organised, adaptable communities built on trust, shared experience and mutual support. Their success across hundreds of thousands of years demonstrates that cooperation, learning and resilience were among their greatest strengths, enabling them to survive in some of the harshest environments prehistoric Britain ever experienced.

Did You Know?

Scientists believe that the total Neanderthal population living across Europe at any one time may have numbered only a few tens of thousands of people, making them far less numerous than modern humans today.

Beliefs and Ritual

What Neanderthals believed remains uncertain. They left no written records and no monuments, so archaeologists must interpret the evidence carefully.

Some discoveries from Europe suggest that Neanderthals may have treated the dead with care or collected unusual objects such as ochre, fossils or animal parts. These finds may hint at symbolic behaviour, but they remain debated.

For now, the safest conclusion is that Neanderthals were capable of complex behaviour, but their beliefs remain one of archaeology's most difficult questions.

Did You Know?

Pieces of red ochre have been found at some Neanderthal sites in Europe. Although archaeologists are still debating how they were used, they may represent some of the earliest evidence for symbolic behaviour.

Britain in the Wider World

For much of the Middle Palaeolithic, Britain formed part of a much larger landscape stretching across north western Europe. During periods of lower sea level, extensive areas of land were exposed across what is now the North Sea, allowing Neanderthals and animals to move between Britain and continental Europe..

Archaeological discoveries show strong links between Britain and mainland Europe. Similar stone tools, especially those made using the Levallois technique, have been found in both regions, demonstrating that Neanderthal groups shared knowledge and adapted to comparable environments. These similarities suggest that Britain formed part of a wider network of movement rather than existing in isolation.

Neanderthals occupied Britain only when conditions allowed. As climates deteriorated, populations disappeared from the country, sometimes for tens of thousands of years. When the landscape again became habitable, Neanderthals returned. Britain's Middle Palaeolithic story is therefore one of repeated occupation and abandonment within a continually changing Pleistocene world.

Did You Know?

DNA studies have shown that Neanderthals and modern humans met and had children together. As a result, most people living outside Africa today carry a small percentage of Neanderthal DNA inherited from these ancient encounters.

Why This Period Matters

The Middle Palaeolithic has transformed our understanding of Britain's earliest inhabitants. Neanderthals were once portrayed as simple and unintelligent, but decades of archaeological research have revealed a very different picture. They were capable hunters, skilled toolmakers and adaptable people who survived for hundreds of thousands of years in constantly changing environments.

Stone tools, butchered animal bones, cave deposits and rare fossil remains provide valuable evidence of how Neanderthals lived. By combining these discoveries with scientific studies of climate and ancient landscapes, archaeologists can reconstruct the world they inhabited and the challenges they overcame.

This period is important because it reminds us that Britain's human story was never continuous. Changing climates repeatedly transformed the landscape, forcing Neanderthals to leave before later populations returned when conditions improved. Their presence in Britain was temporary and sometimes separated by immense periods of absence. The Middle Palaeolithic therefore reveals how closely human occupation depended upon the changing landscape long before the arrival of our own species.

Did You Know?

Many of the most important discoveries about Neanderthals have been made within the last fifty years. As archaeological techniques continue to improve, our understanding of Britain's Middle Palaeolithic is still developing today.

Investigating the Past

Archaeologists continue to study the Middle Palaeolithic because many important questions remain unanswered. Every excavation, scientific analysis and new discovery helps us understand more about how Neanderthals lived and how they adapted to Britain's changing Ice Age landscapes.

Much of the evidence comes from caves, river gravels and former land surfaces that have survived for tens of thousands of years. Excavating these sites is a slow and careful process. Archaeologists record the exact position of every stone tool, bone and sediment layer before anything is removed. Even the smallest discovery can provide valuable information about how a site was used.

Modern science has transformed the study of the Middle Palaeolithic. Radiometric dating allows archaeologists to estimate the age of archaeological deposits, while microscopic analysis reveals how stone tools were used. Environmental evidence preserved in pollen, animal bones and sediments helps reconstruct the landscapes in which Neanderthals lived. DNA recovered from Neanderthal fossils elsewhere in Europe has also revealed how closely related they were to modern humans.

Many questions remain. How often did Neanderthals visit Britain? Did they return to the same places over many generations? How did they organise their hunting? What caused their eventual disappearance? Each new discovery helps answer some of these questions while raising others.

Archaeology is always developing. New techniques and fresh discoveries continue to improve our understanding of the Middle Palaeolithic, showing that the study of Britain's earliest people is far from complete.

Paviland Cave, Wales. Photograph: David Tyers (Geograph), CC BY-SA 2.0.



Glossary

Archaeology
The study of people from the past through the objects, buildings and other evidence they left behind.

Climate
The average weather conditions over a long period of time.

Doggerland
The vast area of land that once connected Britain to mainland Europe during periods of low sea level.

Flint
A hard stone that was widely used for making tools throughout prehistory.

Glaciation
A period when large ice sheets spread across the land during the Ice Age.

Ice Age
A long period of Earth's history during which permanent ice sheets exist, containing colder glacial periods and warmer interglacials. We are still living within the Quaternary Ice Age today.

Levallois Technique
A method of preparing a stone core so that flakes of a planned size and shape could be removed to make tools.

Middle Palaeolithic
The period between about 300,000 and 40,000 years ago when Neanderthals occupied Britain during warmer phases of the Ice Age.

Neanderthal
An extinct human species (*Homo neanderthalensis*) that lived across Europe and parts of western Asia before the arrival of modern humans.

Open-air Site
An archaeological site located in the landscape rather than inside a cave or rock shelter.

Pollen
Tiny grains produced by plants that help archaeologists reconstruct ancient environments and climates.

Prepared Core
A stone core that has been carefully shaped before flakes are removed using the Levallois technique.

Radiometric Dating
Scientific methods used to determine the age of archaeological sites and objects.

Stone Tool
A tool made by shaping stone for cutting, scraping, piercing or other tasks.

Tundra
A cold, open landscape with very few trees, common during the coldest parts of the Ice Age.

Suggested Reading and Places to Visit

Suggested Reading

Ashton, N. *Early Humans*.

Pettitt, P. and White, M. *The British Palaeolithic: Human Societies at the Edge of the Pleistocene World*.

Roberts, M. B. and Parfitt, S. *Boxgrove: A Middle Pleistocene Hominid Site at Eartham Quarry, Boxgrove, West Sussex*.

Stringer, C. *Britain: One Million Years of the Human Story*.

Wenban-Smith, F. *The British Palaeolithic*.

White, M. and Ashton, N. *The Ancient Human Occupation of Britain*.

Places to Visit

Pontnewydd Cave, North Wales
One of Britain's most important Neanderthal sites, where fossil teeth and stone tools have revealed early human occupation.

Creswell Crags, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire
Britain's best-known Ice Age cave complex, with museums, guided tours and internationally important archaeological discoveries.

Lynford Quarry, Norfolk
One of the country's richest Middle Palaeolithic sites, famous for evidence of Neanderthal hunting and butchered mammoth remains.

Kent's Cavern, Devon
A spectacular cave system preserving evidence of human occupation spanning hundreds of thousands of years.

British Museum, London
Displays important artefacts from Britain's prehistoric past, including material relating to the Palaeolithic.

National Museum Wales
Houses important finds from Pontnewydd Cave and other Welsh prehistoric sites.

About the Author

Matthew Armitage is a writer and former archaeologist who worked with five major archaeological organisations before moving into the heritage sector. His field experience includes excavations, landscape survey and artefact recording across Britain and overseas.

He is the author of **Before England**, a narrative history of Britain from the Ice Age to the Norman Conquest and writes to make archaeology accessible to a wider audience through evidence-based storytelling.

Matthew is also Managing Director of the historic Tooley's Boatyard in Banbury and continues to promote Britain's archaeological and industrial heritage through research, publications and public engagement.

About Before England

This Learning Companion supports **Before England**, Matthew Armitage's exploration of Britain's story from the earliest human occupation to the Norman Conquest.

While *Before England* presents the complete narrative of Britain's ancient past, the **Before England Learning Companion** series examines the archaeological evidence behind each period. Together they provide both the story and the evidence that allows us to understand it.

Continue Exploring Britain's Past

This guide is one volume in the **Before England Learning Companion** series.

1. The Lower Palaeolithic - Britain's First People and the Earliest Evidence
2. The Middle Palaeolithic - Neanderthals and Ice Age Britain
3. The Upper Palaeolithic - Modern Humans and the Return to Britain
4. The Mesolithic - Hunters-Gatherers and a Changing Landscape
5. The Neolithic - Farmers, Monuments and the Communities
6. The Early Bronze Age - Farming, Communities and the First Landscapes
7. The Iron Age - Hillforts, Tribal Life and Landscape of power
8. Roman Britain - Conquest, Settlement and Life in a Provincial World
9. Early Anglo-Saxon Britain – Settlements, Faith and the Forging of Kingdoms
10. Later Anglo-Saxon England - Kings, Kingdoms and a Changing Britain
11. Viking Britain - Raids, Settlements and the Making of England
12. Norman Conquest – Invasion, Conquest and a New Order

Explore Britain's past, one period at a time.