

POOLE'S CAVERN

A Natural Shelter

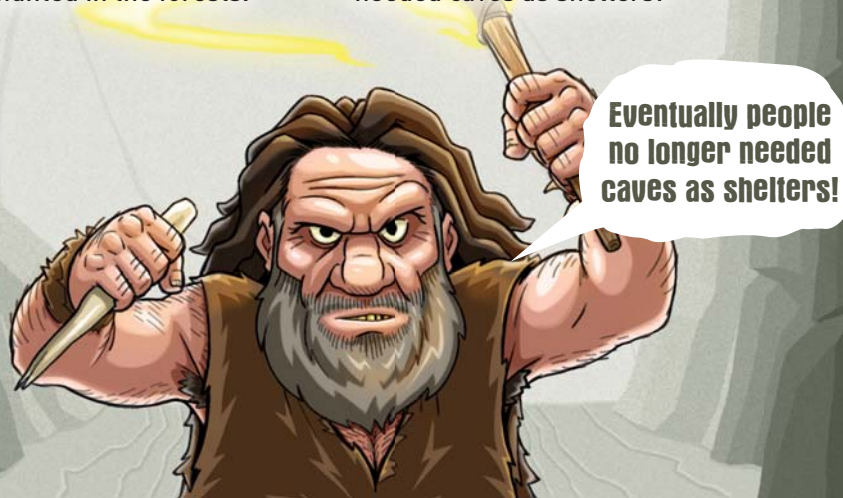
Poole's Cavern is a natural shelter from cold, winter weather. Inside the cave, protected from wind and snow, the temperature is always 7°C and without sunshine, the cave doesn't get any warmer than this.

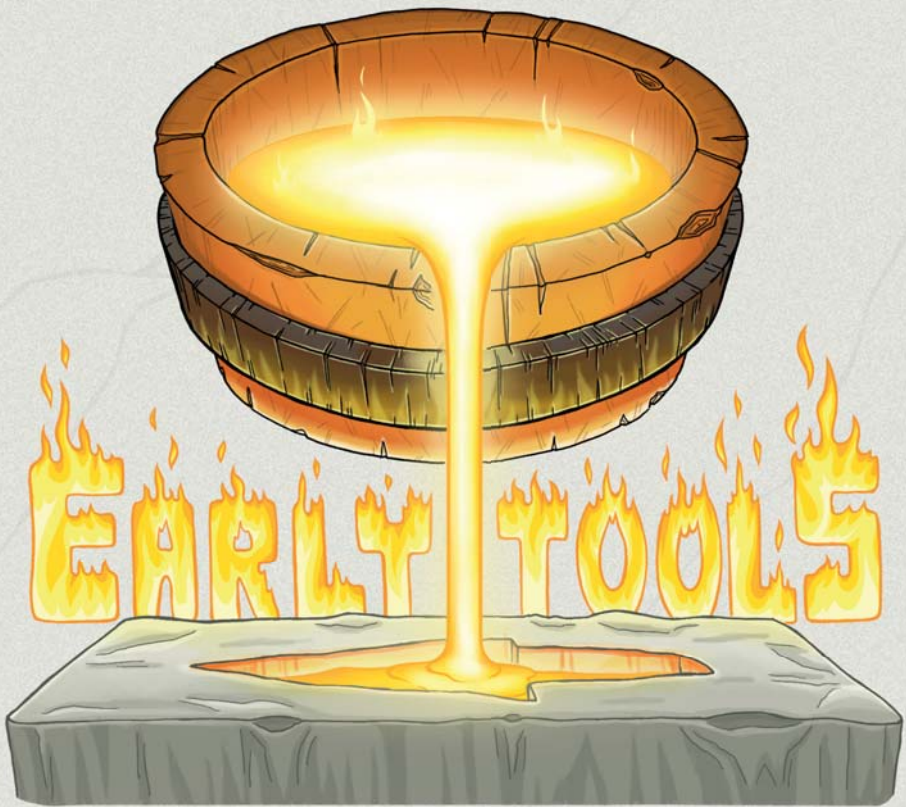
Prehistoric hunters probably found Poole's Cavern more than 5,000 years ago and used the cave as a shelter. At this time they used tools made from sharp flint and stone. These tools have been found in the cave, along with the bones of animals, including wild boar and deer, which early man hunted in the forests.

Flint, when struck, creates a spark and fires could be lit to cook and provide warmth and light in the cave. Wild animals also used the caves for shelter and this included bears and wolves!

Therefore, entering a cave would have been a dangerous adventure for early man.

Stone Age people were farmers who used stone axes to cut trees and clear the ground to grow crops and build huts. Eventually people no longer needed caves as shelters!



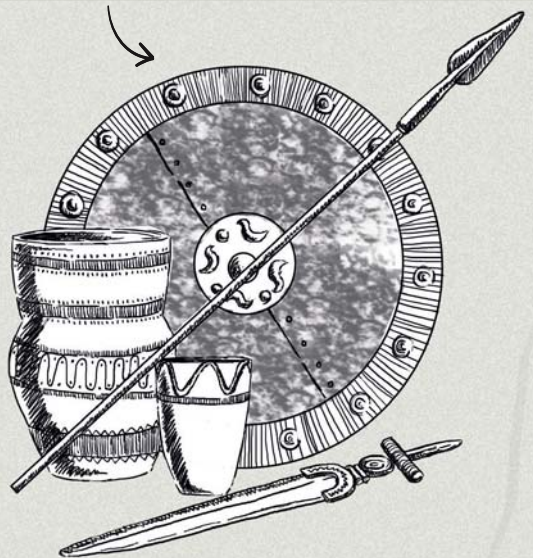


The first metal tools were used around 3,500 years ago. Early man found heating rocks containing copper and tin to melting point made a metal called bronze. Bronze was harder and sharper than stone for tools and weapons. Bronze Age people lived in small villages and used caves and hilltops as burial grounds and religious places.

Several human skeletons and bronze tools and pottery have been found by archaeologists. Archaeologists are experts in discovering and learning about ancient people.

In Victorian times a Bronze Age burial ground was discovered at the top of the hill called Grin Low, where a viewing tower now stands.

As early people learned how to make better metal tools, iron became the most common metal.





THE AGE OF IRON

Around 1,500 years ago Iron Age farmers lived close by the cave. They might have used the cave as a food store, keeping grain in pots inside the cool cavern, a bit like we use a fridge today. They may also have hidden inside the cave to avoid being attacked by other tribes. Many Iron Age people built forts on the top of hills across the Peak District to protect themselves.

Their world changed dramatically in AD 43 when the Romans, who had conquered much of Europe, invaded Britain. Some Iron Age tribes fought the Romans, but Britain was eventually conquered. They lived alongside each other, trading and learning from each other's cultures.

"WE WILL CONQUER!"



The Romans Arrive

In the nearby town of Buxton, a Roman settlement grew around a spring of natural warm water, which flows from deep underground. Both Iron Age and Roman people believed this water was a gift from the gods and worshipped the springs. Coins and bronze jewellery were thrown into the water as offerings.

Inside Poole's Cavern hundreds of Roman coins, jewellery, including brooches and pins, and pottery have been found, left as presents to the gods of the underworld.

Have you ever thrown a coin into a wishing well?



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