

Neolithic Boy - 5,500 years ago

It was during the Neolithic period that the earliest farming communities developed; from about 6000 years ago. Forests were now being cleared and crops grown. This was the time also when animals like sheep, cows, pigs and goats were starting to be kept as well as dogs. People tended now to wander less and started settling in one place and creating settlements. Skills in pottery making began to develop. In previous periods stone tools were fashioned by chipping or 'knapping'. This involved the removal of flakes using either a hammer stone or a 'soft hammer' of bone or antler. In the Neolithic, axes and knives were first roughed-out by knapping, but were then polished using abrasive sand and water, or a rubbing stone. This time-consuming process produced a more durable cutting edge that could easily be sharpened.

The Neolithic era sees many chambered tombs being built for the dead, the most notable being **Bryn Celli Ddu** and **Barclodiad y Gawres** on Anglesey, and **Pentre Ifan** in Pembroke shire (pictured below). There is evidence that there was a close cultural link with



Ireland, particularly in the Early Neolithic period because pottery finds suggest trade with Ireland.

A number of houses from the Neolithic period have also been found in Wales, most notably the settlement at **Clegyr Boia** near **St David's** in **Pembrokeshire**. Many artefacts have also been found, particularly polished stone axeheads. There were a number of "factories" in Wales producing these axeheads, the largest being the **Graig Lwyd factory** at **Penmaenmawr** in Conwy which exported as far afield as Yorkshire and the English Midlands.

Links

<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/2357/>

<http://www.attractionsnorthwales.co.uk/news/227/anglesey-neolithic-burial-chamber-reopens>

<http://www.walesdirectory.co.uk/his/bury/waelod.htm>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/north_east/7471742.stm

<http://www.castles.me.uk/neolithic-architecture.htm>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/timeline/neolithic_timeline_noflash.shtml