

Farming

At the end of the last ice age, from around 9,600 years ago, hunter gatherers left their nomadic lifestyle and began to settle down. They stopped following the animals herds they relied on for food and began to setup small areas to keep some animals in one place and to grow plants. For most of the 800,000 years before this, hunter gatherer life hardly changed. Becoming farmers was one the biggest change that humans made and it was one that truly started them on the path to becoming us.



Pots

German corded ware pots very similar to beaker pottery

One of the biggest technological advances early farmers made was the ability to make pots. This involved understanding what materials to use and how to make a kiln that could 'fire' a pot up to around 600 degrees centigrade. Archaeologists know from the lining of early pots that they didn't do the washing up! They may have been dirtier than we would like but they left lots of evidence of what was in them.



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Once metals were being used, farmers were able to make tools that made life easier, like this iron sickle. **What do you think this was used for?**

Prehistoric Meltdown 1

10,000 years ago (what period was that?) most of Northern Britain and Scotland was covered in a huge ice sheet. The land below that was a cold 'tundra'. That means it was so cold only some grasses, small trees and shrubs grew there. Herds of reindeer would have been the main source of food for the hunter gatherer groups roaming the tundra. About 9,600 years ago the ice sheet started to melt and as the weather changed, Britain became a land covered in forests, teeming with animals and vegetation that could support a very different way of life.



This sequence shows how the land would have gradually changed from the very earliest settlements to to larger farms of the iron age. Farming has dramatically changed the British landscape. Archaeologists often take to the skies to spot evidence of ancient farms and settlements.

