

# Museum explorers

## Ancient Britain

The Open Futures family trails are funded by



## Welcome

This trail guides you on a fascinating journey of exploration and discovery around the Museum. On the way you'll track down some amazing treasures and experience tales of human history from around the world. You'll also need to search, look, pose and draw.

Whichever way you go, and whatever you discover, enjoy yourself! If you ever feel lost, just ask a member of staff for help.

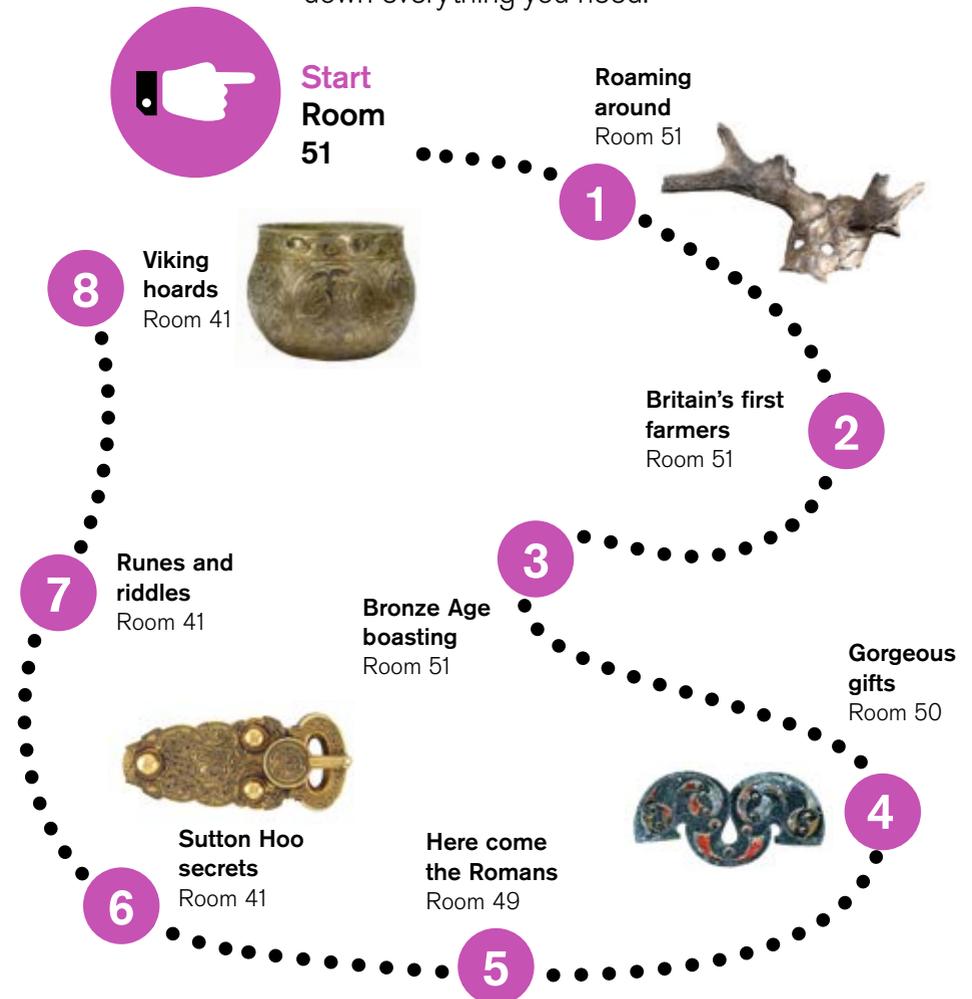
### Useful information for families

- You can pick up a map in the Great Court to help you get around the Museum.
- Accessible toilets and baby changing facilities are available. You can breastfeed and bottle feed anywhere on the Museum's grounds but if you would like more privacy, the Museum has two feeding rooms. For details, ask at the Families Desk or Information Desk, or look at the map.
- You can leave fold-up pushchairs in the cloakroom free of charge.
- You can find child-friendly food at the cafés. High chairs are available.
- You can use the Ford Centre for Young Visitors to picnic with your family at weekends and during school holidays.

# A trip to ancient Britain

Take a trip through thousands of years of British history to find out how life has changed across the centuries. You'll explore how ancient Britons lived and encounter peoples who moved here from overseas.

You'll need the sharp eyes of a historian to track down everything you need.

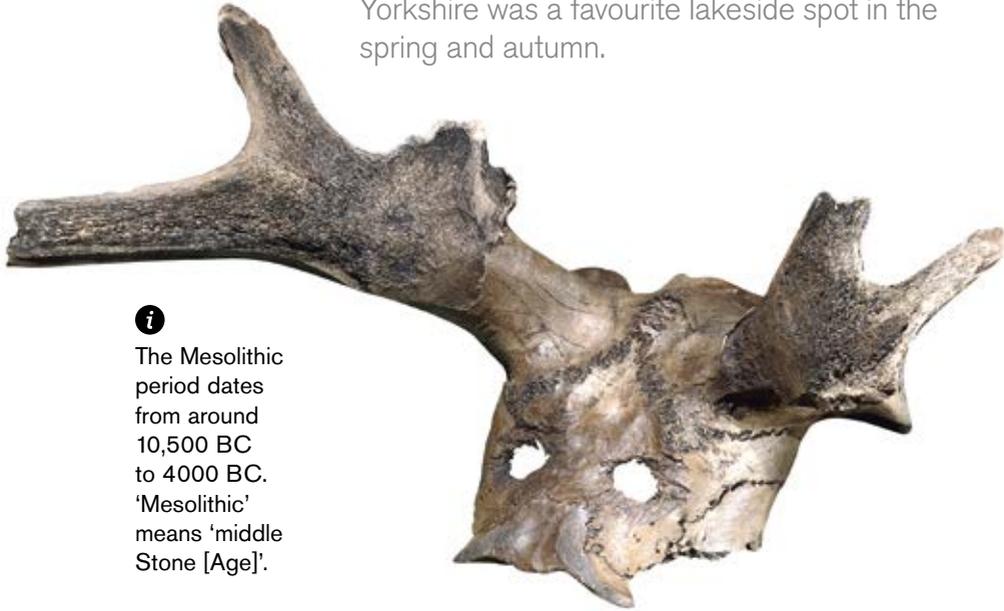


1

## Roaming around

First, head to Room 51 on Level 3 and find Case 4.

Mesolithic hunter-gatherers moved from place to place to find food. They hunted animals, caught fish and gathered plants. Star Carr in North Yorkshire was a favourite lakeside spot in the spring and autumn.



**i** The Mesolithic period dates from around 10,500 BC to 4000 BC. 'Mesolithic' means 'middle Stone [Age]'.

**Find** the deer-skull headdress.

Imagine you are wearing it.  
**Walk or dance** like a deer.



1 2 3

**Find** the wooden box packed with shells.  
How many different sorts of shell can you spot?



■ scallop



■ mussel



■ oyster



■ cockle

?

**Find** the birch bark rolls.

Pretend to roll a strip of bark. Roll it really tight.



# 2

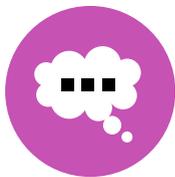
## Britain's first farmers

Now find Cases 6, 9 and 10.



The Neolithic period dates from around 4000 BC to 2400 BC. 'Neolithic' means 'new Stone [Age]'.

Neolithic farmers cut down trees to clear space for crops, animals and houses. During this period people began to own more things. They wore jewellery made from shiny metals and stones.



**Find** these mysterious objects in Case 6. Nobody knows what they are!

What would you use them for? **Make up a story** about a farmer and these objects.



**Look** in Case 9 and find:

- A bracelet
- A necklace
- A brooch
- An armlet

**Which** of these pieces of jewellery would you like to wear?

**Find** the saddle quern in Case 10. They were used to grind wheat.



Grinding was hard work. **Act out** how you would use these stones to grind wheat.

**How long** do you think you could do this before your arms started to ache?



# 3

## Bronze Age boasting

Now find Cases 10, 8 and 11.



The Bronze Age in Britain dates from around 2400 BC to 800 BC.

Bronze Age people liked to show off. They held big feasts, wore gold and decorated their belongings with bold patterns.



**Spot** the metal cauldron in Case 10.

**What** would you add to make a Bronze Age stew?



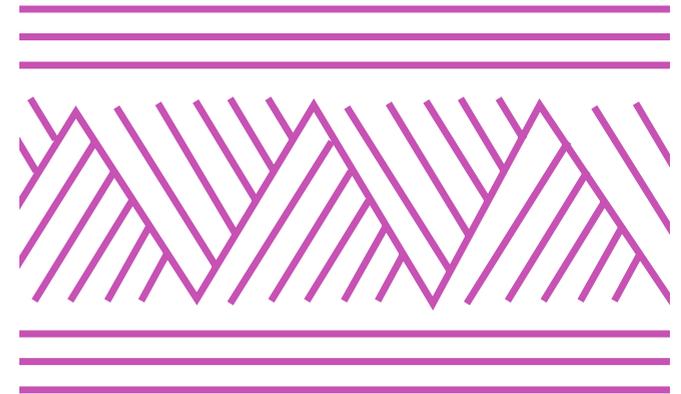
**Find** the gold cape in Case 8.

**Imagine** putting it on your shoulders. How would you feel? If you were a superhero with a cape what would your special power be?



**Find** the patterned pots in Case 11.

**How** do you think the patterns were made on the clay?



# 4

## Gorgeous gifts

Now go into Room 50 and find Cases 19 and 9.



The Iron Age in Britain dates from around 800 BC to AD 43.

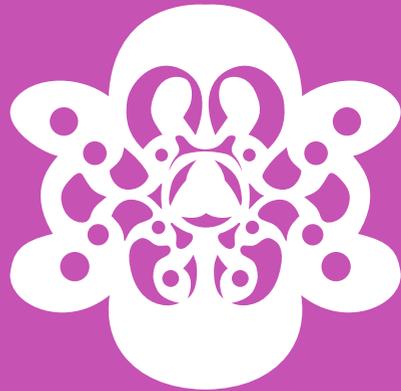
Iron Age people gave presents to gods and goddesses to keep them happy. The best gifts were made of gold, silver or bronze covered with beautiful patterns.



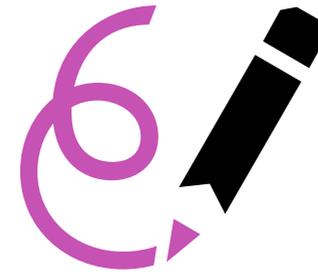
All the things in Case 19 were presents given to the gods. **How would** you feel if you received one of these gifts?

**What's** the best gift you've ever been given?

**Look** in Case 9. Choose an object you would like to give to someone in your group.



Iron Age patterns like these were made up of swirly lines.



Choose your favourite pattern in the gallery and copy it here.

# 5

## Here come the Romans

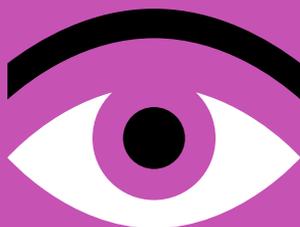
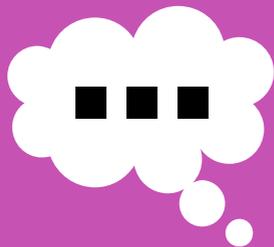
Now move into Room 49 and find Cases 6, 8, 2 and 22.

When the Romans arrived in Britain they brought a huge army, the Latin language and new ways of eating and drinking. They also introduced lettuce and grapes, but not pizza or pasta.

**Imagine** you're joining the Roman army. Look at the military kit in Cases 6 and 8. Choose four items to take on patrol with you.

The Romans spoke and wrote in Latin. Find Case 2. **Choose** some objects to put in your Roman pencil case.

Romans used beautiful tableware to impress their guests. **Look** in Case 22 and pick out a plate for a bunch of grapes.



# 6

## Sutton Hoo secrets

Go into Room 41 and find the large glass case in the centre of the gallery.

**i** Walk all the way round the case to find the objects.

The Anglo-Saxon burial at Sutton Hoo was hidden under a massive mound of earth for over 1,000 years. When archaeologists dug it up they found a magnificent collection of objects carefully laid out in the middle of a ship.



**Find** a shield, whetstone and great gold buckle. Can you spot a six-winged dragon and a bird with a curly beak on one of these objects?

What animal stands on top of the whetstone? **Pull a face** like the ones carved into its sides.



Look at the twisting lines on the gold buckle. **Trace** one through the air with your finger.

# 7

## Runes and riddles

Find Case 2, near the exit to Room 40.

**i** Look at the pictures on the lid and all four sides of the casket. The Anglo-Saxon period covered the years AD 410 to AD 1066.

This whalebone box is decorated with early Anglo-Saxon letters called runes. It also features pictures from myths and historical stories. The casket is named after Augustus Franks, who gave it to the Museum.



**Find** the runes on the box.

Do any of them look like letters you use for writing?

FILHNEFWA



Now look at the pictures.

**Find:**



■ Warriors carrying spears



■ A horse



■ Someone standing in an arched window



**What** object would you give to a museum so people in the future could understand what life is like today?

# 8

## Viking hoards

Now find Cases 23 and 25.

The Vikings loved hoards – groups of objects hidden together inside a bag or box. Vikings particularly liked to hoard silver.



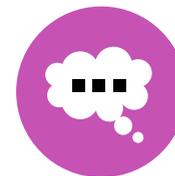
**Find** the Cuerdale Hoard in Case 23. This contained over 8,000 silver objects. What different objects can you see?



Hoards were sometimes stored in gilded silver cups.



**Find** two cups that held hoards in Case 25.



**Imagine** you had a hoard. What precious things would you collect? What would you keep the hoard in?



## You've completed the **Ancient Britain** trail!

What an adventure you've been on. You've travelled through over 10,000 years of British history and explored how life changed with the arrival of the Romans and the Vikings. **Of all the things you discovered, what was your favourite?**

As a reward for completing the trail, here's a prehistoric mystery object. Turn the picture upside down and see if you can spot the cat!



Iron Age mirror,  
Room 51



You can find out even more about life in ancient Britain in other parts of the Museum:

- **Snap** your photo next to the Roman emperor Hadrian in Room 70.
- **Pretend** to be a Lewis chess piece in Room 40.
- **Track** down a rare Iron Age horned helmet in Room 50.



Other things you could do when you get home:

- **Make a Bronze Age pot**  
Don't forget to decorate it.
- **Design an Iron Age pattern**  
Make it swirly!
- **Learn to speak like a Roman**  
Find out how to say 'hello' and 'goodbye' in Latin.

**See you back at the  
British Museum soon!**

