

## Ancient Animals in the Peak

### Aims of the session

Look at evidence for the ancient animals

Which are extinct, which still live here?

How has the environment and climate changed in the past?



Rhinoceros teeth, around 120,000 years old

### Curriculum links

These sessions will support pupils to:

Develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study. They should note connections, contrasts and trends overtime and develop the appropriate use of historical terms.

They should regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance. They should construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information. They should understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

A visit to the Wonders of the Peak gallery will contribute to both an overview and a depth study to help pupils understand both the long arc of development and complexity of specific aspects of the content.

- A local study and a depth study linked to Prehistory
- Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age.
- A study over time tracing how several aspects of national history are reflected in the locality.

### Resources

Handling collection, [www.wondersofthepeak.org.uk](http://www.wondersofthepeak.org.uk)

**KS2**
**Session 2 : Time travel in the Peak District 1 million to 350,000 years ago**

The aim of this session is to explore the evidence of life in the local area 1,000,000 to 350,000 years ago. Explore how life in the area would have been different for people and animals.

Curriculum Links	Activities	Plenary	Follow Up Activities
<p><b>Best for: KS2</b></p> <p><b>Learning opportunities for gaining an understanding of:</b> how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources both the long arc of development and complexity of specific aspects of the content</p> <p><b>Introduction:</b> Explain that pupils will find out about the earliest mammals and people who lived in the area. Can they find the Hopton Hand Axe? What is the story behind this object?  Explain that the pupils are going to look at some animal bones. They were found by a young boy in 1903 but they are thousands of years old.  Can the pupils find anything out about the boy who found the bones? Where was he at the time and what was he doing?</p>	<p><b>Before handling objects</b> Ask the pupils to recap on how to handle objects safely. Ask pupils to demonstrate how to handle objects safely. Discuss the sorts of questions they need to ask to find out about the objects: Questions should be around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description</li> <li>• Deduction</li> <li>• Interpretation.</li> </ul> <p>Hand out the <b>Investigating objects sheet.</b></p>	<p><b>Handling objects</b> Rotate the animal bones around the pupils. When they have looked at the objects ask for feedback ask them to write down five adjectives to describe the bones or teeth that they have. Hand out the images of animals. Can the children match the animal part to the animal?</p>	<p><b>Predator or Prey</b> Ask the children to look carefully at the images of animals. Do they think they would have been prey or predators? How can they tell? Think about the size of the animal, where eyes are placed, type of teeth etc. Look for evidence of animals who no longer live in the Peak District. Can the children work out why?</p> <p><b>Discuss</b> Use the Hopton Hand Axe to begin to explore what life might have been like for the earliest people in the area.  What might life have been like, sharing the area with wild animals?  How might the earliest people have survived?  Ask children to write a description of a typical day. Would these people live like us? Would they sleep like us? When would they get up, what they have for breakfast, what they wear?</p>

## Supporting information for teachers

### 1,000,000 years ago

About 1 million years ago, herds of horses, bison and even mastodon (a type of elephant) roamed the Peak District. They were hunted by scimitar-toothed cats.

### 350,000 to 15,000 years ago

#### Evidence of humans and animals: Hopton hand axe

The earliest evidence for people in Derbyshire is the Hopton Hand Axe. It is thought to be up to 350,000 years old. This is the oldest made object to be found in the area.

Archaeologists cannot be sure if an ancient hunter (*Homo Heidelbergensis*, an ancestor of Neanderthals and modern Humans) dropped the hand axe in Derbyshire, or if it was carried to the Peak District by ice and meltwater. If people were around at this time they would have shared the landscape with some serious predators including cave lions, hyenas, wolves, and bears.

During the Ice Age there were some warmer periods when grasslands could grow. These grasslands provided food for grazing animals including deer, rhinoceros, horses and hippopotamus. When it became too cold in Derbyshire for many animals and people to survive so they moved to the warmer south. Only animals that could survive in colder climates stayed here.

### How do we know?

In 1903 a young boy called Master Hick (we don't have any more information on his name) was helping his father in Victory Quarry, Dove Holes. When the dust settled after his father had detonated charges in the quarry, the boy found a collection of bones and teeth. He took these to Buxton Museum which was then in Buxton Town Hall. The curator asked Professor Boyd Dawkins, an expert in geology from Manchester Museum for help in identifying them. The exhibits on show are from this discovery. They show two incisors and a piece of



shinbone from a scimitar-tooth cat. Cave lion remains were found at Hindlow Quarry. Other excavations at Hoe Grange and Windy Knoll unearthed more bones.

## **Activity Handling objects**

Pass around the animal bones and teeth.

- Hyena tooth
- Bison tooth
- Mammoth/mastodon tooth
- Hippo incisor
- Straight tusked elephant
- Images of animals

Can the children identify what these objects are and which animal they might have belonged to. Match the tooth to the animal image.

Ask the children if they can work out which animals would have been predators?

Which would have been prey?

How do we know this? (Shape of the teeth, are they small for eating nuts and berries or are they sharp and pointed for meat eaters? Where are their eyes? If they are at the side of their heads, they can look out for predators more easily than if their eyes were like ours, looking forwards. Predators don't need to worry quite so much about being attacked, so their eyes will generally look forward).

How many times bigger than the children's teeth are the teeth in the collection?

**Deer bone (handling object)**



This is a leg bone (or metatarsal). Can the children work out which animal it is from?

Prompt: think about the size, thickness. This animal is still found in the wild in Derbyshire today.

**Suggested activity**

**In the gallery**

**Find**

Find the animal bones from Victory Quarry, which is about three miles north of Buxton. (In the Timeline there are teeth and bones from a scimitar-toothed cat). Children can also search for the remains of a cave lion. Can they work out what the cave lion might have eaten? (Gnawed bones also found in the cave).

Look for evidence of other animals that we don't see any longer in the wild in Britain.

## Discuss

Use the Hopton Hand Axe to discuss what life might have been like for the hunter who may have dropped the axe. Focus on the language used (might, may, could). Even experts don't know for certain how the axe came to be in the Peak District. How might the owner have used the hand axe? Archaeologists believe tools like hand axes and scrapers were used to prepare meat and the skins of animals.

Explore how different life 350,000 years ago might have been.

Ask the children to write a description of their day (now) from getting up, what sort of houses we live in, what they are built from, what we eat for breakfast, journey to school, school etc.

What might a typical day have been like for the owner of the hand axe?

- Where might they live?
- Where might they sleep?
- What might they eat? What might they wear?
- What might they find difficult?
- Did they have hobbies? Music, art, drawing, making clothes?
- Write a day in the life for this person.



Look for details in the gallery to support your theories.

### **Challenge/back in the classroom**

#### **Creative writing**

Use the future archaeologist activity from **Museum experts**.

#### **Imagine if....**

People living hundreds of thousands of years ago would have had few possessions. They travelled in search of food. If they couldn't find food, they would starve.

Ask the children to talk about their most prized possessions or the most useful things we have today. Then ask them to write a story of a typical day, imaging these items have magically disappeared. How might life change?

Can pupils think of objects we use today that would help archaeologists 1000 years in the future to learn about life today? Which objects might be difficult to understand?