

Bryn Eryr

An Iron Age Farmhouse



Level 2/Upper Intermediate

Before your visit...

Read this information about the Iron Age farmhouses called Bryn Eyr.

Who owned these houses?

These houses show how people lived in the Iron Age, about 2,000 years ago. They are based on **evidence** from a site on Anglesey in north Wales, called Bryn Eyr, which was once owned by a wealthy and important farming family. Their houses were big for the age and well-built and they were set within a large **defensive enclosure**.

How did they live?

The farmers of Bryn Eyr looked after cattle and sheep, but not pigs, and we know that they farmed wheat, barley and oats. Their crops were stored in **granaries** built beside their houses. They also owned horses – the **jaw** of a horse was found in a ditch by the entrance to the houses.

1. _____

The building materials that the people of Bryn Eyr used to build their houses reflect the available resources of their area. There wasn't much suitable building stone available locally, nor was their **plentiful** timber, so instead they built their walls from **clay**, dug from around their homes.

2. _____

The contents of the smaller house reflect the type of furniture and objects that people owned in the Iron Age. Much of the furniture is a **best guess** of what they once had, but many of the smaller items are based on objects in the Museum's collections. Life was conducted around the fire, and the most **prestigious** item in the house was probably the cauldron, which was used as the centrepiece in feasts.

The larger house has been kept deliberately empty to be used as a teaching space for schools. In the Iron Age it was probably the more important house of the two.

3. _____

Bryn Eyr was probably lived in for generations and it continued to be occupied after the Romans conquered Anglesey in AD60. But after this date it became less important, the main houses were **abandoned** and a smaller stone roundhouse was built instead. By the time the Romans left the site had been abandoned.

Task 1: Match the missing headings to the paragraph.

- a) What happened to the houses? b) What's in the houses?
c) Why are the houses built in this style?

Task 2 : Find these words and phrases in the text. Write the word or phrase in the gap to complete the sentences.

best guess plentiful evidence jaw prestigious granaries abandon
clay defensive enclosure

1. We use a type of heavy soil called _____ for making things like bricks and pots
2. When there is a lot of something available we say it is _____.
3. We use _____ to show that something exists or is true.
4. _____ are buildings for storing grain like wheat and barley.
5. The bone in your mouth that contains your lower teeth is called your _____.
6. A _____ object is one that is respected and admired, usually because it is important.
7. If you _____ something, you leave it and don't return to get it.
8. A _____ _____ is our opinion about the thing that was most likely to have happened.
9. A _____ _____ is a small area that has a wall or fence around it, which protects the people living there from attack.

Task 3: Read these sentences about Bryn Eryr. Decide if they are true (T), false (F) or if the text doesn't say (D). Write T, F or D next to the sentence.

1. Bryn Eryr was originally built in north Wales. ____
2. The houses were unprotected and open to attack. ____
3. The farmers grew one type of crop. ____
4. There is no evidence to show that the farmers owned horses. ____
5. A large amount of wood was available for building houses. ____
6. All the furniture in the farmhouses comes from Wales. ____
7. A large cooking pot was an important part of celebrations at this time ____
8. Today school children and their teachers can use one of the houses. ____
9. Romans came to north Wales nearly two thousand years ago. ____
10. Roman families lived in the farmhouses. ____

On your visit...

Read the notice boards and talk to the Museum staff. Can you find this information?

Task 1:

These people are making clom. What is clom made from and where can you find it in the Farmhouses?



What part of the Farmhouse is this? What material is it made from? Where did the material come from?

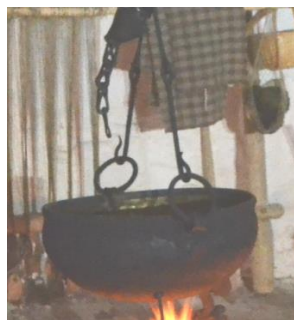


Task 2: Can you find and identify these items?

a)



b)



c)



d)



e)



f)



Task 3: Match the name of the item to its picture. Write the letter of the picture next to its name.

1. pestle and mortar ____ 2. quern ____ 3. fire dogs ____ 4. loom ____ 5. cauldron ____
6. oak bench ____

Task 4: Fill the gaps in the text with the name of the item.

1. A _____ was used to weave wool into fabric for clothes and blankets.
2. A _____ were used to remove the husk, which is the outer part, from the grain of a type of wheat called spelt.
3. A _____ was used to grind flour to make bread. The original ones would be embedded into the floor to stop them moving.
4. A _____ was a large pot used for cooking. They were very expensive and were seen as a status symbol. This means that if you had one of these other people would think you were very important.
5. _____ were used either side of a fire place to lift the wood off the ground and make it easier to burn. These would have been very expensive for people at this time and only rich and important people would own a set.
6. The _____ was used as a seat for the owner of the house. This one has iron brackets instead of wood which was more common at this time. This shows that the owner was an important man.

Take a picture of an interesting object in the Farmhouse. Find out what it is called and what it is used for. Write some notes about the object so that you can tell your class about it.

After your visit...

Task 1: Read this information about the project to build Bryn Eryr.

Who built our farmhouses?

From the beginning of the project, we wanted the building of our roundhouses to be an opportunity for everyone to be involved.

- During the build, over 2,000 school children visited the construction site. Many helped with building the walls of the activity shelter and patching the walls of the main houses.
- Over 30 children on the edge of exclusion from schools in the Caerau and Ely area helped with building the activity shelter.
- Members of the nearby Caerau and Ely communities helped with an excavation which took place on the site of the Old Celtic Village to help us understand how these roundhouses had fared over the previous twenty years.
- Over 1,400 people volunteered their time to help with preparing timbers for the roof, working on the walls and with threshing straw and thatching the roof.
- Hafal (the charity for people with mental illnesses and their carers) and the Probation Service played a particularly big role in thatching the roof of the smaller roundhouse.

Task 2: Discussion

- Why do you think the Museum wanted to involve the community in building the farmhouses?
- The article mentions three groups involved with people who have difficulties in their lives. Who are they?
- How do you think this project benefits the local community?

Task 3: Writing

Write a letter to a friend telling them about the Bryn Eryr farmhouses. In your letter write about:

- The history of the farmhouses
- Interesting objects in the farmhouses
- The benefits of involving the community in the Bryn Eryr project

Write about 180 words