

Irish Giant Deer Antlers



Item: Irish Giant Deer Antlers

Date: 11,000-8000 BC

Find Location: Remains of Irish Giant Deer uncovered or exhibited in Lagore crannog, Dunshaughlin; Kilnew, Bellewstown; Lisboe, Kingscourt; Kilskyre; Liss House, Oldcastle; Mountainstown, Wilkinstown; Newtown Estate, Drumcourath; River Dee, in bed of river between Nobber and Whitewood; Ballybetagh; Bloomsbury, Kells; Newrath Little, Kells and Williamstown Kells.

Current Location: Locally held, some sold at auction, others National Museum of Ireland

Description:

This reconstructed skull with two antlers spanning a width of 304 cm and a height of 122cm, nine points to the left and eight to the right, with composition restoration was found on a north Meath estate and displayed in the estate house until sold at auction in recent years. The first recorded example of this species was discovered in “a great bogge” in county Meath in 1588.

The Irish elk or Irish giant deer, is an extinct species of deer in the genus *Megaloceros* and is one of the largest deer that ever lived. Its range extended across Eurasia during the Pleistocene, from Ireland to Siberia to China. This Giant Irish Deer is believed to have roamed the lowlands of central and eastern Ireland, weighing up to 800-1000 lbs. and stood at 2 metres at the shoulder, with antler width of up to 4 metres. They had large palm like antlers, the largest antlers know to have existed on any deer. It is understood they were a victim of the Ice Age finally disappearing from Ireland around 10,500 years ago.

The best collection of fossil's can be found at the National Museum of Ireland where there are 10 complete deer skeletons and over 250 partial remains, which includes 6 females.

Further Information:

<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/mammal/artio/irishelk.html>

<http://www.wilddeerireland.com/elk.html>

Flint Tools



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Item: Two flint microliths and three flint blades

Date: 7000-6000 BC

Find Location: Randalstown, Navan.

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

A microlith is a small stone tool usually made of flint or chert and typically a centimetre or so in length and half a centimetre wide. Blades are a specialized type of lithic flakes that are at least twice as long as they are wide. These items were uncovered at the site of the medieval church at Randalstown. Neolithic Scrapers were discovered along with an item resembling a Mesolithic boring tool and microliths. These items represent a camp rather than a permanent settlement. These people moved to secure the best food sources. The earliest evidence for human colonisation/habitation of this island can be attributed to the Mesolithic (c.7500-4500 BC). In this post-glacial phase, with an improved climate, dense woodland cover and an increasing population of wild fauna, the first settlers coming from the east, found a suitable habitat to accommodate their hunter gatherer lifestyle. Excavation of the earliest settlements in Ireland has produced tiny blades and points of flint and chert, called microliths that were used in composite harpoon-like implements. Scrapers and stone axes were also utilised.

Further Information:

Mesolithic Fish Trap



Item: Fish Trap

Date: Mesolithic c. 5000 B.C.

Find Location: Clowanstown, Dunshaughlin.

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.

Description:

A woven basketry fish-trap constructed from alder and birch and used for fishing on the small lake which existed at Clowanstown in the Middle Stone Age. c. 5000 B.C. The conical trap was used by early Irish people to scoop fish from the lake or catch them in a weir. Radiocarbon tests date its creation to between 5210 and 4970 BC. The warp-and- weft technique is quite advanced and similar to the way of weaving cloth that would be developed much later in human history. The Irish trap is of classic design and similar ones are still in use around the world. The item was discovered at Clowanstown, during archaeological investigations in advance of the construction of the M3 Clonee – North of Kells Motorway.

Further Information:

A history of Ireland in 100 objects by Fintan O'Toole

www.tii.ie/tii-library/archaeology/.../catch-of-the-day-at-clowanstown.pdf

<http://www.museum.ie/Archaeology/Explore-Learn/Schools-Teachers/Post-Primary/Prehistoric-Ireland>

bottom of page for links

www.museum.ie/NationalMuseumIreland/media/Archaeology.../fishtraps_1.pdf

<http://www.nra.ie/technical-services/archaeology/seandaezine/archaeology-through-art/>