

Britain before the Romans

Before the Romans came to Britain the land was lived in by a people called the Celts. They lived in groups of people called tribes and these tribes were ruled over by a chieftain. Hundreds of years before the Celts had moved from their lands by the Danube River looking for more land across Europe. They ruled most of Europe before the Romans began their conquest.

The Celts lived in round houses made of wattle and daub with thatched roofs. They lived in small farming settlements protected by ditches and wood fences to keep out intruders and wild animals. They also lived in larger settlements which were heavily defended forts.

The Celts were a very superstitious people with nearly 400 gods and goddesses. These gods lived in oak woods, rivers, springs and lakes. The places were special to the Celts as they were homes of their gods and they would have their religious ceremonies, weddings and name their children in their special places. They would also make offerings to their gods in these places. They used to throw their precious jewellery made of gold or silver in lakes as a gift to the gods that lived there. Or bury special jewellery in the sacred oak forests. Their priests were called druids and were shown great respect across all the Celtic kingdoms. The druids knew the history of the people and would tell tales to the people of their history and legends.

The Celts were brave and fierce warriors. They fought with javelins, spears and long broad swords, they were also excellent horsemen and could fight on horseback too. They liked to tell stories of their great deeds in battle. Sometimes their women were warriors too and would fight along side them in battle.

The Celts liked to wear colourful clothes and used reds and yellows and blues in their weaving. This clothing is fairly similar to the tartans worn in Scotland. They also loved beautiful jewellery. They were known for the golden bands called torques they wore around their necks and arms.

Questions

1. What were the people who lived in Britain before the Romans came called?

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2. They lived in groups of people called

3. What was their leader called?

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4. What kind of house did the Celts live in?

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5. What was this house made of?

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6. Explain how your house is different to the houses the Celts lived in.

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7. How did the Celts make a living?

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8. How did they protect their settlements from wild animals and intruders?

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9. Where did the Celts believe their gods and goddesses lived?

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10. How did they make offerings to their gods?

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11. What were Celtic priests called ?

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