Course: British Civilization

Lesson three: The History of Britain

**The Stone AGE**

The Stone Age began around 30,000 BCE and lasted until 3,000 BCE, although some researchers argue it actually started approximately 2.6 million years ago. This era is defined by the creation and use of tools and weapons made of stone, as well as materialslike horns, ivory, and wood.

**The Bronze AGE**

The Bronze Age began around 3300 BCE, but its start varied by region. It lasted approximately two thousand years, dominating much of the ancient world until around 1200 BCE.

**The Iron AGE**

‘Iron Age’ is a modern concept that archaeologists created in the nineteenth century as a means for organizing their study of prehistoric materials.

They define the Iron Age in Europe as the period between the times that communities first began to adopt iron as their principal material for making tools and the Roman conquests of the last century BC and the first century AD.

**The Celts:**

The Celts were a collection of peoples who spread across Europe around the Bronze and Iron Age. There is still much debate about the origins of the Celts amongst historians. The exact origins and history of the Celts is debated amongst historians. Because the Celts did not have written historical records, much of their history is lost and what we know of their culture has been pieced together from surviving examples of their art. As such, there is a lot of uncertainty about the history of the Celts.

Celts spoke Celtic languages who lived during the Iron Age, between 600 BC and 43 AD.

The Celts are thought to have begun with the Hallstatt culture, which existing in the Bronze Age and into the Iron Age.

The Celts spread across Europe, living in areas including France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Spain, and Britain.

The Celts were often in conflict with the Romans, who invaded many Celtic lands during their conquest of Europe, including Britain. Celtic people were pushed back to Ireland and other islands of the British Isles. Much of the recorded history of the Celts at the time comes from the Romans.

Around 700 BC, the Celts likely migrated to Britain from central Europe or southern Russia, possibly with peaceful intentions but also with the capability for invasion. They brought advanced ironworking techniques and improved ploughing methods, which allowed them to thrive in the lowland areas of Britain. Over the next seven centuries, the Celts continued to migrate in successive waves, establishing themselves as the ancestors of many modern populations in Highland Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and Cornwall.

**Celtic culture: branches and tribes**

There were three main branches of Celts, and within these branches were many tribes. The three main branches were:

**Brythonic** (also called Britons), who lived around modern-day Cornwall and Wales.

**Gaelic** (also called Gaels), who were based in Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man.

**Gaulic** (also called Gauls), who lived across modern-day France, Belgium, Switzerland and Northern Italy.