

glenullin Iron Age Culture

Gleann An Iolair 'the eagle's glen'

It is believed the small circular structures seen here at this location, low wall bases built from stones and earthen sods, are all that remain of huts from an Iron Age settlement (c 500BC - 500AD).

Around 500BC a people from western Europe called the Celts began to arrive in Britain and Ireland. They introduced the use of iron beginning the Iron Age in Britain and Ireland.

Iron was harder than bronze so the tools and weapons brought over by the Celts were better than those made of bronze. Considered good farmers, the Celts were also fierce warriors and

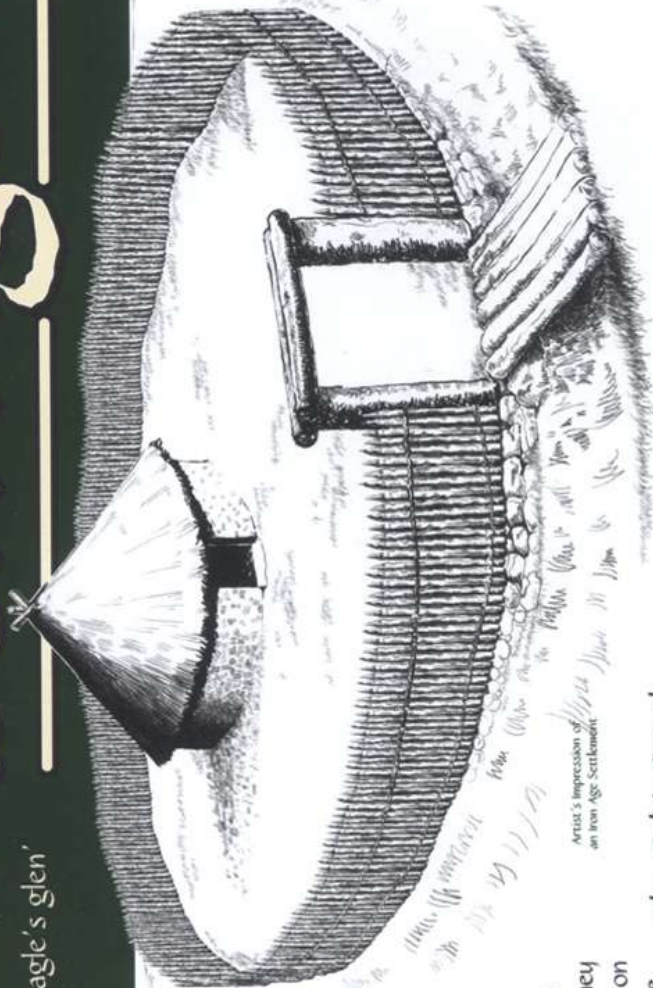
soon took over most of Britain and large parts of Ireland.

Iron Age Settlement

The Celts mostly lived in circular houses built from stones or wattle and mud.

To protect themselves against enemy raids, they often built stone forts on hilltops. Most of these simple forts would have served a practical purpose of defence, compared with the large royal sites such as Navan Fort, Co. Armagh (Emain Macha - the ancient capital of Ulster), and Tara,

Co. Meath (the symbolic and political capital of pre-Christian Ireland), which appear to have been used for ritual and kingship purposes.



Artist's impression of an Iron Age Settlement

The Celtic People

It is likely that the Celtic tribes were led by warrior chieftains. It is thought the Celts were generally tall and strong, with fair or reddish hair. They were fond of fine ornaments,

coloured clothes and jewellery. Characteristic pieces included torcs (silver neck rings), brooches and fibulae (cuff-links). They produced metalwork

beautifully decorated in a free, swirling style called La Tene, after the Swiss lakeside site where archaeologists have found many iron and bronze items.



Ogham

The Celts invented a kind of writing called Ogham which, when inscribed on natural stone pillars, resulted in ogham stones. Groups of short lines representing letters were cut into the edges of the stone pillar. The stones were read from bottom to top. Ogham often appeared on tombstones.

church at Derrrykeighan, Co. Antrim, approximately 16 miles from this site.



Artist's impression of the Bann Disc

Farming

The Celts continued the work of turning the forests into fields for raising cattle, sheep and pigs. Using iron axes and ploughs, they also tilled the land near their homes for growing barley, oats, flax, onions and leeks.

Iron Age Art

The Bann Disc is regarded as one of the finest artistic creations of Iron Age craftsmen in Ireland (discovered in the River Bann approximately 12 miles from this site). It consists of a circular bronze plate about 10.5 cms in diameter, displaying a triple whirling-gig spiralling out from a central circle.

Iron Age art was not only found on metal objects but also occurred on stones. One good local example was discovered in the gable wall of a ruined

