

The Ice Age in North Hertfordshire



Part of a mammoth's tusk found in Baldock in the 1920s

Thinking about 'the Ice Age' brings up images of tundra, mammoths, Neanderthals and great sheets of ice across the landscape. This simple picture is wrong in many ways. Firstly, there have been many different 'Ice Ages' in the history of the earth. The period most people think about as the 'real' Ice Age is the geologists' Pleistocene era, from more than two-and-a-half million years ago to the beginning of the Holocene, almost 12,000 years ago.

Even if we want to think of the Pleistocene as the important Ice Age, we still need to dispel some common misconceptions. It lasted from about 2,588,000 to 11,700 years ago and was not a period of constant cold. True enough, it was a time of repeated glaciations, but these were mixed with much warmer periods. We should think more in terms of repeated rapid climate change. For more than 2 million years, the climate flipped between cold and warm, with the shift between them sometimes much less than a century. The change could be short enough for an individual to notice the variation in climate during their lifetimes.

[Find out more about the Ice Age in North Hertfordshire here.](#)

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