

Mammoths in North Herts



The bones of these amazing animals have been found alongside the tools Neanderthals used to hunt them.

Bits of tusk and teeth have been found in Baldock and Hitchin.

Handaxes from 40-50,000 years ago have been found all over the district.

You cannot hunt a mammoth on your own: it is too big and dangerous. This means we know Neanderthals would hunt in groups. This also kept them safe from being hunted by bears, wolf packs and lynx. They might have chased animals until they fell into a pit or off a cliff, or they could throw spears made from stone at the animal's side. Sometimes Neanderthal people would find a newly killed mammoth and they would chase off the animals that killed it and *scavenge (*eat food killed by something else) the *carcass (*dead body). Meat could be hung to dry in the cold wind this would last longer than fresh meat.

If you lived in a place where the ground was nearly always frozen and few trees grew, just twisted bushes and heather, it would be hard to find good shelter. Animal skins and the bigger animal bones would be the most useful things to make shelters from in summer.

In winter, we think they headed south across the land bridge to southern Europe away from the freezing cold.

In summer they would eat bilberries and other wild fruits that grow in the cold north. At this time, Britain was joined to Europe and in the very cold weather people might well move south to warmer areas where hunting was easier.

Suggested Stone Age activities to try

Try an Ice age feast of honey and blueberries. If you want to try meat that has dried out, try biltong.

Try plaiting grass to make a long tough string. This is not easy and will take practice.

Imagine going on a hunting trip. What would you do to catch the mammoth?

Would you follow hunting wolves and hope to steal their kill?

Draw a picture showing your hunt. Put in the animals you hunt and the things you used to hunt with.