

# Stone Age Homes 7000 - 2000 BC



## Early Times - Stone Age Man

The first evidence of early man in Ireland comes from the period around 7000 BC. The first settlers may have arrived from the shores of Britain. They lived by hunting wild animals and birds, fishing and by collecting shellfish, roots and leaves. The earliest structures associated with man in Ireland were discovered at **Mount Sandel near Coleraine, Co.Londonderry**. Groups of postholes, pits and hearths suggested the existence of circular huts about six metres in diameter.



Soon after 4000 BC the first farming communities became established in Ireland continuing until approximately 1800 BC. The sites surviving from this long period include settlements, industrial sites and different types of stone built tombs.

Farmers needed stronger houses to live in and so a new design evolved. Thick wooden uprights were erected and hazel or willow rods were woven round these in a basket fashion. When a Neolithic site was excavated on a small glacial sand and gravel hill at **Ballynagilly in Co.Tyrone**, traces of a rectangular timber-built house were found.



Left, Neolithic dwelling

**The Giant's Ring at Ballynahatty** - South of Belfast is a vast circular enclosure occupying about seven acres. This circular form is also found in the raths, forts and cashels of Ireland and in the artificial islands - crannogs - built as defensive homes.

**Navan Fort** - Huge circular enclosure of about 12 acres. Research shows that from the middle of the first millennium this was a series of circular houses with attached yards, all timber-based and representing many generations of use. These were replaced by a massive structure 40m in diameter built of concentric rings of large posts round a central post.

SEE THESE RECONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS AT THE ULSTER HISTORY PARK NEAR OMAGH. FOR DETAILS VISIT THEIR SITE AT: [www.omagh.gov.uk/historypark](http://www.omagh.gov.uk/historypark) OR CONTACT STAFF DIRECTLY AT [uhp@omagh.gov.uk](mailto:uhp@omagh.gov.uk)

