

# EARLY SETTLEMENT IN ATHLONE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

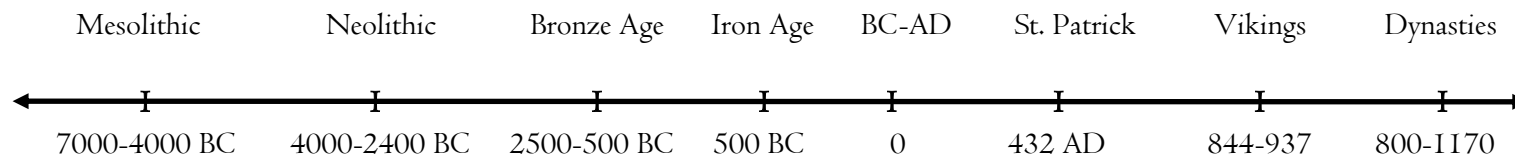
ATHLONE  
CASTLE



Caisleán  
Áth Luain



## TIME-LINE



# PREHISTORIC TIMES

(Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age)

**Mesolithic** people were hunter-gatherers which meant they ate whatever they could catch or find and they never stayed long in one place. They hunted with spears, arrows and harpoons with sharpened stone blades called microliths.

What did the Mesolithic people eat?

Choose from the list below:

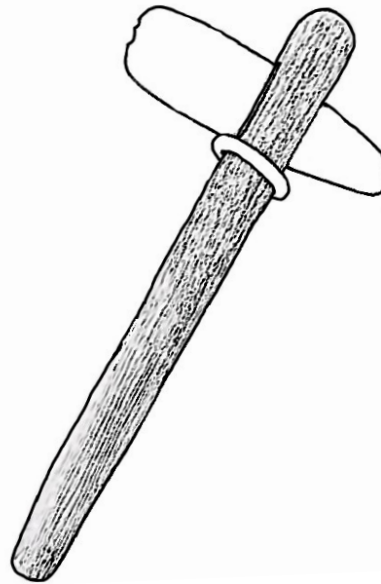
SEAFOOD	BERRIES	CHICKEN
BREAD	NUTS	FRUIT
MILK	CAKE	WILD BOAR

What did Mesolithic people used to sharpen their stone tools?

.....

Did you know:

There is evidence that people used the ford on the River Shannon over 8000 years ago.



## Fact:

The oldest Neolithic field system known in the world has been preserved under the peat in Ceide Fields co. Mayo

The first farmers were **Neolithic** people, who lived here 6000-4500 years ago. They grew cereals like wheat and barley and kept goats, sheep and domesticated oxen.

They used tools made of polished stone to cut the forest, prepare little fields for growing cereal, and to make houses and boats. They built Megalithic monuments like the Portal dolmen at Mihanboy, the passage grave at Scregg and the wedge grave at Fuerty.

Look at the tools on display. Can you guess what they were used for?

AXEHEADS .....

HAMMER .....

ADZE .....



**The Bronze Age** introduced metalworking in bronze (a mix of copper and tin) and gold. The metal tools and weapons were stronger and worked better than stone ones.

Look again at the display.

What bronze objects can you see?

Do you know how were they made?

.....

Did you know:

The Bronze Age people threw weapons, ornaments and coins to the river probably as an offering to Gods for safe-crossing.

The Iron Age is not represented by many archaeological finds. Travellers at that time must have chosen the Slige Mor (Great Road) south of Athlone (the track leading to Clonmacnoise)

Did you know:

It's during the Iron Age times that Athlone got its name Áth Luain.

Press the first button on our 3D map to find out where the name came from. Use this space to draw Luan during his escape



# EARLY IRISH CHRISTIAN CHURCH

‘Ciaran, go with God’s word to the centre of Ireland, and found your church on the banks of a stream.’

The most famous monastery in the midlands was set up in Clonmacnoise by St. Ciaran himself, but there were numerous smaller ones in the area.

Explore the 3D map to find out the location of two such sites:

.....

.....

Look at the three carved stones.

The graves of important or respected people buried at Early Christian monasteries were often mark with a decorative grave slab, just like the ones you see here.

Did you know:

Those slabs suggest that there was an Early Christian monastery in Athlone even though it’s not mentioned in any written account.

A smaller piece of the Evangelists slab was donated to the National Museum of Ireland by the father of one of the greatest Irish writers- Oscar Wilde.

Colour this drawing of the Evangelist Slab from Athlone Castle





# VIKINGS

**Viking** attacks on Ireland started in 795 AD.

The Norsemen (as they are also known) were fearless warriors and excellent sailors. They settled on the coasts and used the rivers to travel through Ireland invading towns and monasteries.

Press the button near the 3D map to see where those warriors travelled.

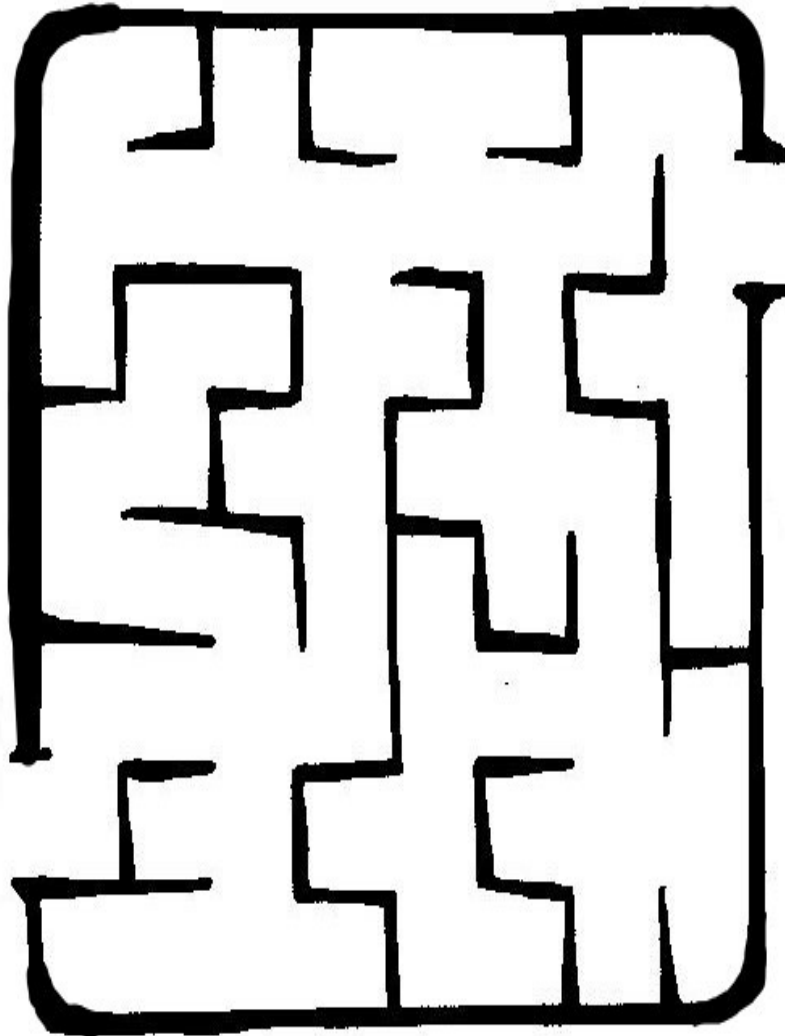
What lake did they choose as their base near Athlone  
L \_ \_ \_ H R \_ \_

Can you remember the name of some of their leaders?

T \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ S, O \_ \_ \_ R the S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ D



**Maze:** Help the Viking reach his treasure!



# DYNASTIES (800-1000 AD)

In the 9<sup>th</sup> Century people lived in farmsteads, known as ring-forts.

Why were they called ring-forts?

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There was about six Irish dynasties- wealthier, powerful families who dominated smaller tribes.

What was the name of the head of the *Ui Briuin* family?

.....

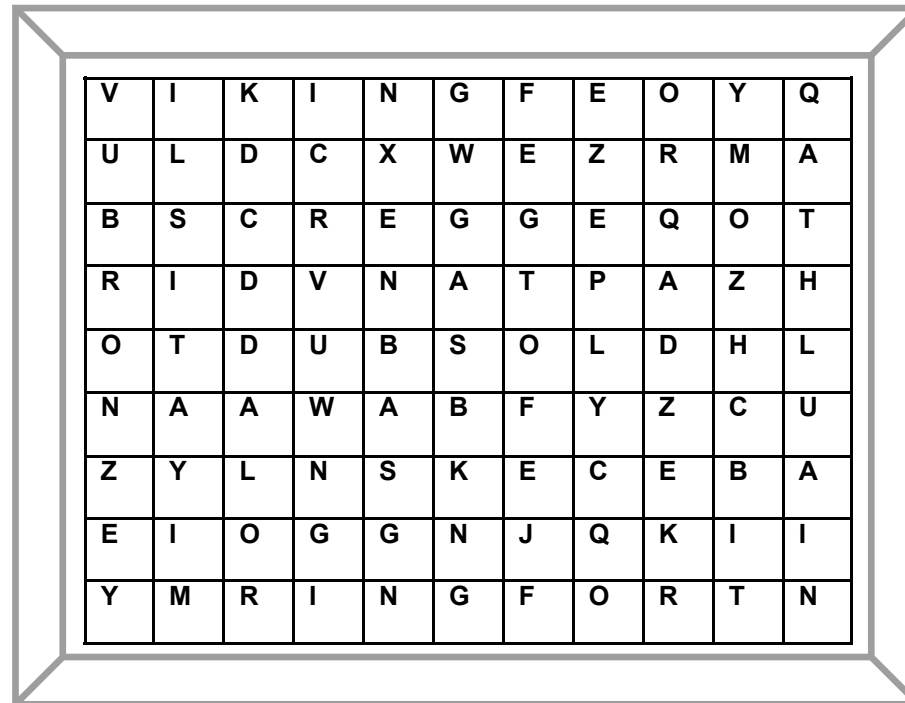
Brian Ború gathered men of Munster, Leinster, Meath, Connacht and Dublin at Ath Luain and from here they plundered the northern tribes. These were very violent times.

## Rise of the Ua Conchobairs (1100-1170)

With the beginning of 12<sup>th</sup> century the Ua Conchobairs (the O'Connors) of Connacht became the most powerful dynastic tribe in Ireland. Toiredelbach and his son Ruaidri Ua Conchobair were high-kings of Ireland.

Were Toiredelbach and Ruaidri peaceful rulers? **Yes / No**

Let's play Wordsearch!



ADZE  
ATH LUAIN  
BRONZE  
MONASTERY  
RING FORTS  
SCREGG  
VIKING

### Did you know:

The first castle at Athlone was built in 1129 for King Toiredelbach and it was made of timber. After only two years it was burned by a thunderbolt.

WELL DONE!!!

Do you want to know more?

For more information on exhibition and educational programmes, contact Athlone Castle:

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