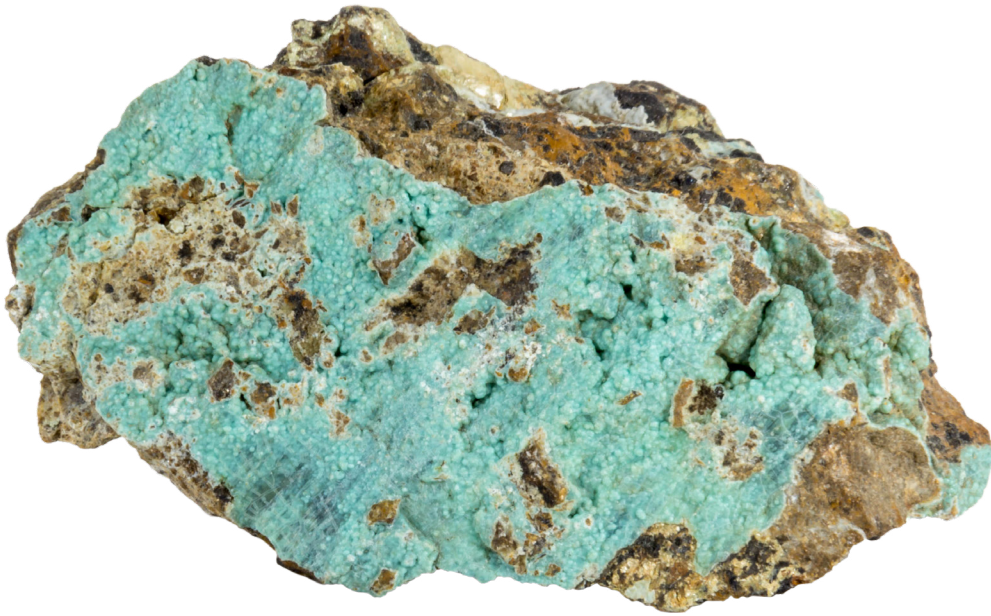


Metal



Ores



copper ore

Metals are found inside rocks. These rocks are called ores. Ores are usually found underground, so people mine for them. In the Bronze Age, children were used as miners because they could fit into small underground passageways.



Copper



Copper was the first metal to be discovered. It is quite soft, so it could be used to make cooking pots but not farming equipment, tools or weapons.



Bronze



People discovered that new metals could be made by mixing metals together. These are called alloys. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. The added tin makes bronze much harder and stronger than copper. Bronze was used to make tools and weapons.



Metallurgy



Metallurgy is the study of metal and working with metal. The Beaker folk brought this knowledge to Britain from Europe. Only a few people had this information and were able to extract metal from ores. This made them very rich.



Craftsmen



Craftsmen shaped the metal into objects. Highly skilled craftsmen were needed to create precious objects, such as intricately patterned jewellery. Traders from mainland Europe sailed to Britain to trade metals and precious objects. The traders also became very wealthy.



Jobs

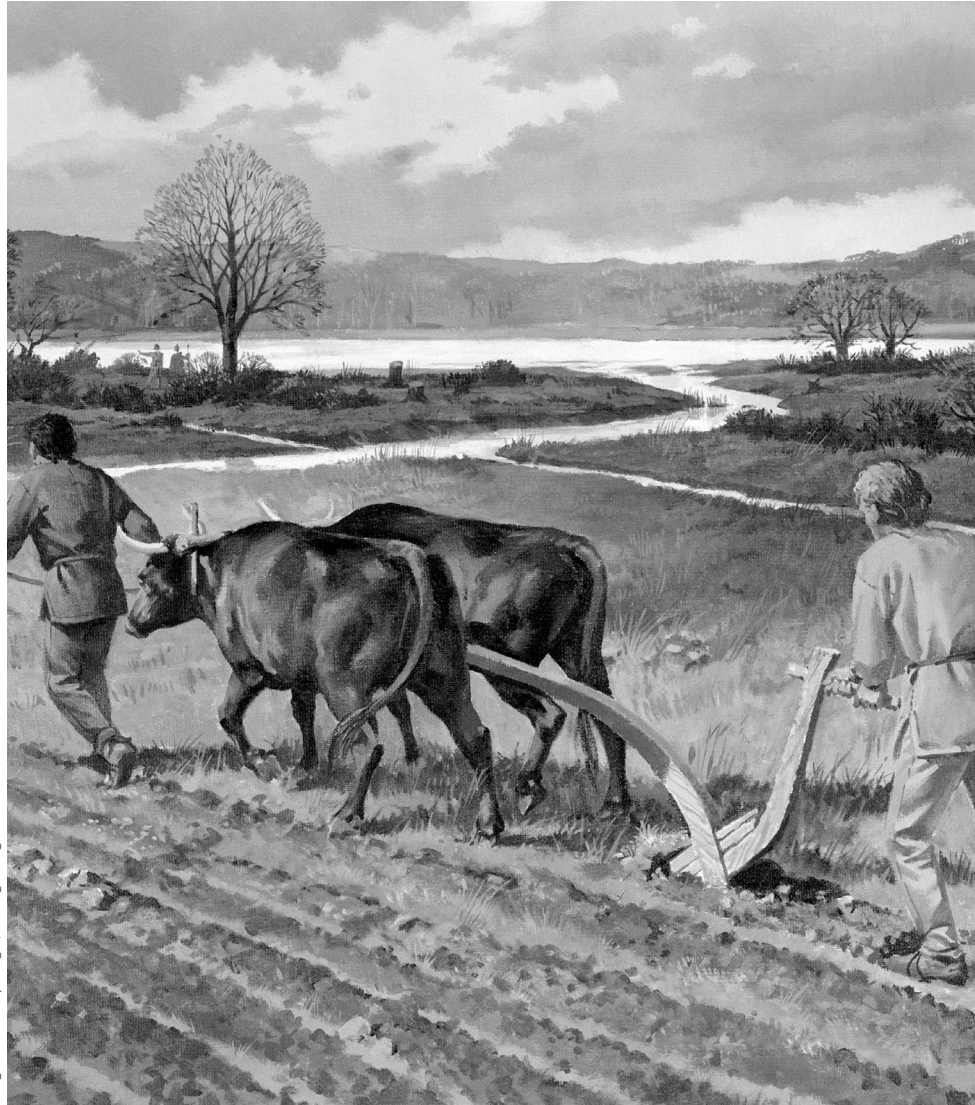


Image from: Getty Images/Heritage Images

Before metal was discovered, the main jobs done by the people in a tribe were farming or hunting for food and other resources. After metal was discovered, new kinds of jobs were created, such as miners, metalworkers, craftsmen, traders and weavers. These people no longer had time to farm the land, so they traded goods with the farmers in exchange for food. This meant that the farmers needed to increase their food production.

Artist's impression of Bronze Age farmers



Farming



bronze plough



bronze sickle

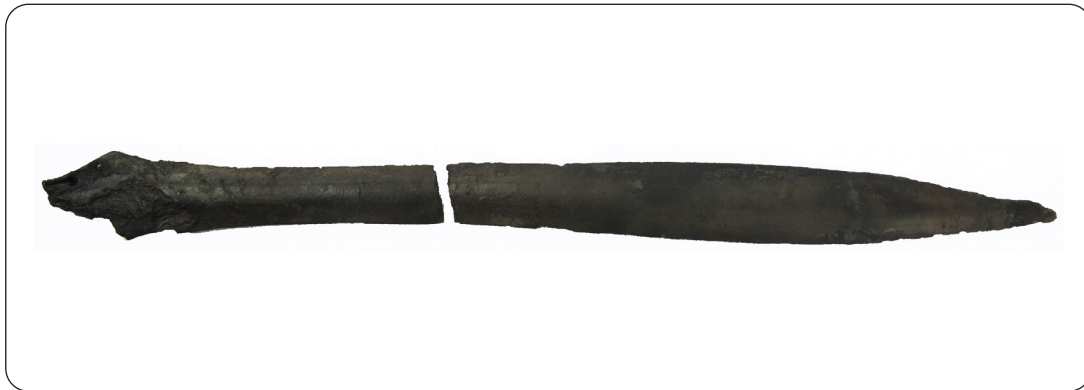
New bronze tools made farming more productive. Bronze axes were better for cutting down trees, so more land was cleared to plant crops. Bronze ploughs broke up the soil even in winter. Bronze sickles helped crops to be cut more quickly, so farmers planted larger fields of crops. Bronze knives were used by farmers to shear their sheep and use their wool.



Warfare



bronze dagger



bronze sword

Warfare became more advanced during the Bronze Age because the weapons and armour were more sophisticated. For example, metal armour was more robust than animal skins, bronze swords could reach further than stone knives, and bronze axes and daggers could inflict more damage than those made from stone.

