

Cheddar Man





Cheddar Gorge

Evidence 1

Place of discovery

Cheddar Man was found in a cave in Cheddar Gorge, Somerset, in 1903. 10,000 years ago, Cheddar Gorge would have been a source of food, water and shelter for hunter-gatherers, like Cheddar Man, who moved around a lot, hunting for food and picking nuts and seeds to eat.

Archaeologists do not know why Cheddar Man was in the cave at Cheddar Gorge. He may have had an accident, died from natural causes, or other people may have buried him there.



Evidence 2

Skeleton

Cheddar Man was a young, healthy man in his twenties, who was around 168cm tall. Radiocarbon dating showed that the skeleton was about 10,000 years old, which meant that Cheddar Man lived in the Mesolithic. He had a hole above his right eye socket, which may have been caused by bone disease or an injury. The skull could also have been damaged during the excavation in 1903.





Reconstruction of Cheddar Man's head

Evidence 3

Genetic analysis

Analysis of Cheddar Man's genetics identified that he had dark wavy hair, pale blue or green eyes and dark or black skin. Archaeologists have found the remains of dark-skinned, blue-eyed European people from the Mesolithic in Spain, Luxembourg and Hungary. These finds suggest that this colouring was not unusual in Europe in the Stone Age and that people who lived thousands of years ago had migrated from Africa and populated Europe.



Evidence 4

Facial reconstruction

Two Dutch artists used the genetic analysis and skull measurements to reconstruct the Cheddar Man's head. When they unveiled the model, some people were surprised, because earlier reconstructions of Cheddar Man had pale skin. This new reconstruction suggested that the lighter skin of many modern Europeans developed less than 10,000 years ago. People were also surprised by the combination of dark skin and blue eyes, which is unusual today.



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Conclusion

The evidence reveals a lot about Cheddar Man's life, including when he lived, his lifestyle, age, height and appearance. However, there are still many questions to be answered. What did Cheddar Man believe? Who were his family? How did he die? Why was he found in a cave? If archaeologists and scientists find new evidence, they might be able to answer some of these questions. However, it is likely that these aspects of Cheddar Man's life will remain a mystery.

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