



Pict Culture

The group of people known as the Picts were not a single tribe. Instead, they were a group of different tribes who fought together. This means that they had some beliefs that they all shared. Each tribe would also have had its own stories and culture. Archaeologists believe that the Picts originally came from Scandinavia.

Unfortunately, the Picts didn't leave behind much evidence of their lives. Most of what we know comes from the Ancient Romans. They lived in Britain at the time. The Picts also carved things into stone. It is possible that the Picts were the first native people of Scotland. They went on to form some of the most powerful medieval kingdoms in northern Britain.

We do know that the Picts built their homes from wood. They lived in small, tight-knit communities. There are lots of detailed carvings in stone. This means that they were able to work stone, but didn't build with it. Scotland is home to lots of large stone structures similar to Stonehenge in England. It is likely that the Picts were responsible for building most of these. One example is the Ness of Brodgar. It is even older than Stonehenge. This means that the Picts had been in Scotland for a very long time before the Romans invaded Britain.

It seems that the Picts formed themselves into clans with a chief ruling each one. These clans often fought for themselves against each other and would steal food and iron from other Picts. However, when somebody attacked from the outside, the Pict tribes got together and attacked as one army. This happened when the Romans tried to invade Scotland.

For most of their history, the Picts worshipped pagan and Celtic gods. These were often linked to nature. Most sites, such as the Ness of Brodgar would have been places for them to worship and carry out rituals. Their goddesses were incredibly powerful, and Pict women were treated as equals to their men. In most civilisations, the next king was chosen from the father's side of the family, because men were considered stronger. In Pictish society, the next chief was chosen from the mother's side.



When the Romans conquered England, they brought Christianity with them. The Picts didn't accept it at first, but over time they gradually accepted the church as their religion. Somewhere around 450 CE to 550 CE, the Pict leaders surrendered to Saint Columba and converted to Christianity. For the next hundred years or so, there were small battles when some Picts tried to hang on to their old ways of life. This included attacking saints and their followers.

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Where did the Picts originally come from?
2. Where does most information about the Picts come from?
3. Which gods did the Picts worship?
4. When did the Picts convert to Christianity?
5. How did Picts try to hang on to their old way of life?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

What is an archaeologist?

S

When would the Picts join together?

V

Find and copy a phrase that tells you Pictish communities were very close.

S

How were Pictish women different to most other civilisations at the time?

I

Why might Picts have attacked the saints that came to visit them?

Answers:

1. Scandinavia
2. The Romans
3. Pagan and Celtic
4. Between 450 CE and 550 CE
5. They attacked saints and their followers

V: Somebody who studies human history

S: When somebody from outside tried to attack them

V: Tight-knit

S: They were treated equally to the men

I: The Picts didn't want to convert to Christianity