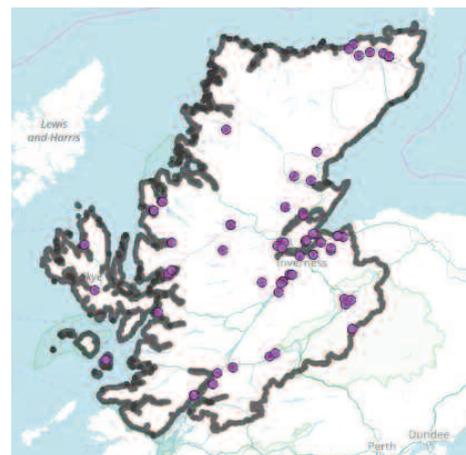


# Bronze Flat Axes

<b>Period:</b>	Bronze Age (c. 2500 – c. 800 BC)
<b>Material:</b>	bronze
<b>Composite item:</b>	other materials include wooden haft, twine or sinew binding, resin glue

The bronze flat axes are based on examples from the Early Bronze Age (around 2500 - 1500 BC). They were made by casting liquid bronze in a mould. This form of production allows great freedom in the form and design of axe, and yet in the early Bronze Age some axes stay fairly similar in form to the



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*This axehead from Nairn has fine decoration. It is now in the NMS, Edinburgh.*

the scale and form of a whole axe from the period. Axeheads hafted in this way could have been used for felling, chopping and carving wood. They could also have been set horizontally which would allow it to be used as an adze for hollowing wood, cutting roots and mattocking earth. The cutting edge has been hammered to harden the bronze and sharpened with a whetstone.

stone axes of the preceding ages. As the era progresses a greater variety of styles were adopted, with more elaborate forms and different hafting techniques being used.

One axe has some casting flaws which has caused the back (known as the 'butt') to break away along with the excess bronze poured into the top of the mould. The surface of each side is also rough and pitted. The raised line on each narrow side of the axehead is where the two halves of the mould met.

The other axe has been roughly hafted using seasoned softwood, hemp twine and glue to give an impression of

The organic wood and binding materials usually rot away, and so only the metal axeheads survive. However, they may not have always been hafted. Very little of the axehead can be seen when hafted, and yet some bear decoration across the entire flat face. This may suggest that, as well as functional tools, axeheads had other significance and roles, just like stone axes in the Neolithic period. Hoards of axeheads are occasionally found, where they have apparently been buried without hafts. Despite the fact that broken or unused items could have been easily melted down and reused, many have survived to be found in recent times.

**What uses can you think of for an un-hafted axehead?**

**Why might axeheads be buried?**

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*Flat Axe from Bishop Kinkell Farm, Conon Bridge, now in the NMS, Edinburgh*

## See also:

CT Bronze Casting  
When? Bronze Age  
Additional Images: Decorated Flat Axeheads

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