

In the **Mesolithic period**, people lived by hunting and fishing and moved around from one seasonal campsite to another. There was threat from wild animals like wolves and bears. No evidence for formal protection have been found in the few Mesolithic settlements which have been excavated.

There is little evidence that **Neolithic** farmers erected defensive enclosures around their settlements. Of the Neolithic houses excavated in recent years none appear to have been enclosed in defensive enclosures.

Causeway Enclosures: a Neolithic monument which may have had a defensive purpose is the causeway enclosure, of which two have been identified in Ireland (Maugheraboy, Co. Sligo and Donegore, Co. Antrim). However, they are as likely to have functioned as places of ritual according to the archaeological evidence.

There is evidence of violence in the Neolithic period. A flint arrowhead was found embedded in the hipbone of the individual buried in Poul nabrone Portal Tomb, though this could have been a hunting accident (see *10,000 Years of Burial* T1,U4,L2).

The **Iron Age** sees the introduction of iron tools and weapons. Other defensive monuments of this period are hilltop enclosures called hillforts, inland promontory forts, and long linear earthworks protecting large territories (like The Black Pig's Dyke along the southern border of Ulster). These are the first 'serious' defensive monuments to be built in Ireland. They reflect both the more serious military nature of warfare after the introduction of iron weaponry, and also the war-like nature of Ireland during the Iron Age.