

Artist impression only



BOG BODIES

1 Bog bodies are the remains of dead people that have been found in bogs. The people died thousands of years ago. However their bodies have been very well preserved. Many look as though they died only recently.

Most bog bodies have been found in England and Ireland. Others have been discovered

in Denmark, Germany and other parts of northwestern Europe.

Normally, bodies are found by workers cutting peat. Peat is rich soil that is made up of dead trees and moss. It was once used in some parts of the world as fuel for fires.

2 When we die, our bodies start to decay. Bacteria and fungi destroy our cells. Maggots eat our flesh. Our skin, muscles and organs break down until only our bony skeletons are left.

However, the bodies pulled from bogs have not decayed much at all. Their skin appears brown and tanned, like leather. Most still have their hair, fingernails and eyes. Some even had fingerprints. Many had hearts, stomachs and intestines. The stomach of one bog body still contained the meal he had eaten just before he died!

3 The peat in the watery bogs help to preserve the bodies. It cuts off the oxygen supply, killing the bacteria that causes bodies to rot and break down.

Bog bodies have only been found in cold places. This is because the water in the bog must be almost freezing (0 degrees Celsius) for a body to become preserved.

4 One famous body is the Lindow Man. In 1983, Andy Mould and Eddie Slack were working in a peat bog in the northwest of England. Their job was to load chunks of the cut peat onto an elevator.

Andy noticed a flat brown leathery thing amongst the peat on the elevator. It looked just like an old soccer ball. Andy pulled it off and washed it clean of dirt. To his horror, he saw an eyeball staring back at him. He'd found a human head!

5 The next year, Andy and Eddie returned to the bog to cut more peat. This time, Andy

removed what he thought was a lump of wood from the elevator. He threw it to his mate, calling 'Catch!'. Eddie missed, and the 'wood' hit the ground. The two workmates gasped. This time, they'd found a human foot.

6 Scientists were called to the bog. They discovered the top half of a man's body, buried in the peat. It had been chopped in half by peat-cutting machinery. The scientists estimated the body to be around 2000 years old.

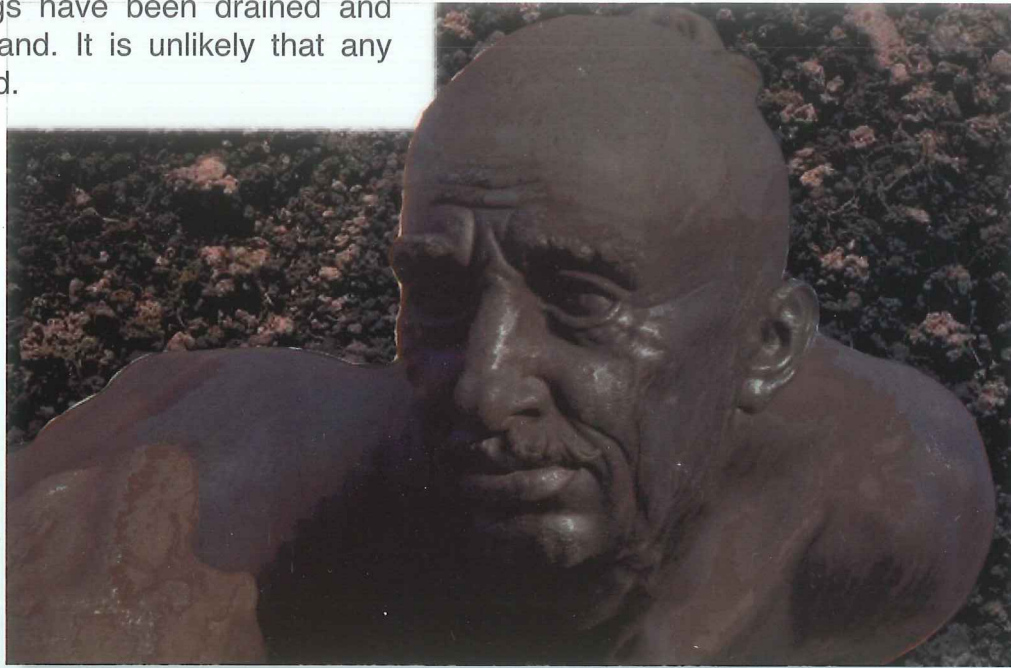
The head from the first find was named Lindow I. The second body was named Lindow II. Three years later, workers found yet another body. This one, named Lindow III, was missing its head. Did the head found four years earlier belong to this body? Maybe. Nobody knows for sure.

7 Around 2000 bodies have been found in the bogs of Europe. A 13-year-old girl was found by peat-cutters in southern Denmark in 1952. Her eyes were bound with a red and yellow headband. A large stone had been dropped on top of her body to make it sink. She had been thrown into the bog as a human sacrifice to a goddess called Ertha. Local farmers were hoping for better crops that year.

8 Most of the bog bodies died violent, gruesome deaths. Some, like Lindow II, had crushed skulls and slit throats. Some were stabbed or had their heads cut off. Others were hanged or strangled with cords.

Scientists can find out a lot about how people lived in the past by studying bog bodies. However, people no longer use peat for fuel.

Many of the bogs have been drained and turned into farmland. It is unlikely that any more will be found.



Questions

- 1 The most bog bodies have been found in
 - a Germany.
 - b Denmark.
 - c England.
- 2 What is NOT something that helps create a bog body?
 - a Bacteria
 - b Lack of oxygen
 - c Very cold temperature
- 3 What part of the 'Lindow Man' was found first?
 - a a foot
 - b a head
 - c a torso
- 4 Andy Mould thought that the Lindow Man's foot was
 - a a soccer ball.
 - b a bit of leather.
 - c a bit of wood.
- 5 Most bog bodies
 - a died violent deaths.
 - b are discovered by scientists.
 - c are found outside of Europe.
- 6 Bog bodies could teach scientists
 - a how to preserve bodies.
 - b how to make peat bogs.
 - c how to find fuel.

Vocabulary

Match the words from the text to the clues. The brackets show the text sections ().

decay estimated drained
preserved gasped

- 7 Kept from being changed or damaged (1)
- 8 To decompose or rot (2)
- 9 Sharply drew in your breath (5)
- 10 Had an educated guess (6)
- 11 Removed the liquid (8)

Grammar

A **preposition** is a word situated before a noun to show when or where something happened.

E.g. **on** the mat, **in** the bin, **over** the fence, **before** the party, **under** the tree. Find a preposition in the sentences below.

- 12 Most bog bodies have been found in England.
- 13 He ate a meal just before he died.
- 14 Andy noticed a flat brown leathery thing amongst the peat.
- 15 Water had been drained from the peat bog.

Back To The Text...

- 16 Key words are important words that help you understand the main ideas. Which of the following is a key word in section 2?
 - a decayed
 - b fingernails

- 17 In which part of the library would you find this text?
 - a fiction
 - b non-fiction

- 18 The purpose of this text is
 - a to persuade.
 - b to inform.

Cloze

Otzi the Iceman

Choose from the following words to complete this cloze passage.

lived mummies body
thousands about

The bog bodies are not the only humans that have been preserved for 19 of years. Apart from the countless Egyptian 20 there are many bodies that have been preserved in ice. Otzi the Iceman was found in the Italian Alps in 1991. He 21 more than 5000 years ago. We have learnt a lot 22 him from the clothes and tools found with the 23.

Challenge Option

Research: Ancient Egyptians made mummies. Find another group that did this.