

# The Mold Cape

## What is the Mold Gold Cape?

The Mold Cape was created out of gold and discovered near the town of Mold, in 1833. It is a rare example of Bronze Age gold craftsmanship from the UK and is permanently housed at the British Museum, such is its importance and uniqueness.

## The Background

Around 1900 - 1600 BC (roughly 300 years after Brymbo Man's burial) an experienced metal worker, using a single gold ingot, created a cape and beat out patterns mimicking multiple strands of beads.

In 1833 labourers from the local workhouse were filling in a gravel pit at the side of the road. They needed more stone so quarried it from a nearby bank. At the centre of the bank was a stone lined grave, complete with a skeleton, crushed fragments of the cape, and amber beads which had been laid in rows upon the cape.

The bank was in fact a Bronze Age burial mound which measured 28 meters in diameter.

Unfortunately all of the beads bar one, and the skeleton were lost which is infuriating! The skeletal remains, though in poor condition, may well have been able to tell us more about the wearer. Luckily, most of the cape fragments were bought from the foreman of the labourers by the British Museum in part thanks to the Rev. Charles Butler Clough, the local vicar, who reported the finds and published a detailed report on them.

The labourers also found part of a bronze knife, bronze backing strips, and even pieces of material, as well as evidence for a second cape. The material may have been attached to the cape but we'll never know.

Experts at first believed the cape would have been worn under the arms by a Chieftain. Later, it was suggested as a peytrel, a decoration worn by a horse.

In the 1950s an archaeologist at Liverpool University and later a conservator at the British Museum undertook new research and realised from the design of the cape it would have been worn around the shoulders by either a slim woman or a child. It would have severely limited upper arm movement so may only have been worn during important occasions.

## Museum From Home



## What does the Mold Cape tell us?

The cape is very much a unique and sophisticated piece displaying a high level of skill and craftsmanship. In fact, it is regarded as one of the finest examples of Bronze Age metal working in Europe.

To make the cape would have been quite labour intensive. Bronze Age society was advanced enough for people to specialise in certain skills and trades such as metal working. The maker would have to have been extremely experienced to produce such a piece.

It was worn to show wealth and status. Possibly the wealth of the wearer came from the Great Orme copper mine.



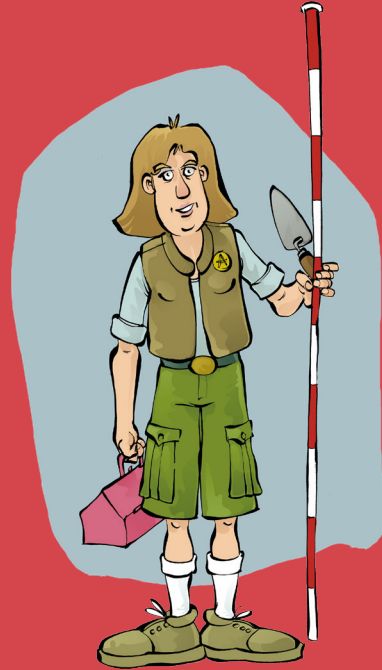
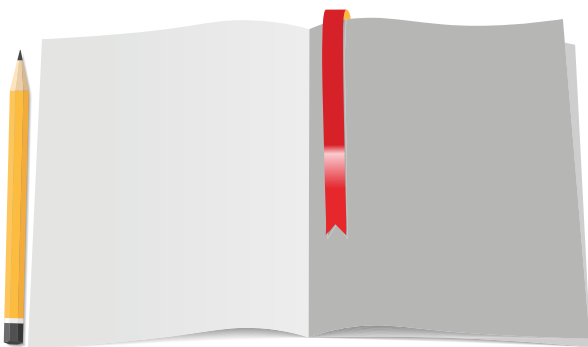
# Activities

1. Make a gold cape cake, or decorated cupcakes, or a giant biscuit. Save us some!



2. Write, draw, or act out a story from the point of view of the wearer.

Why was it given to them? Who by? When did they wear it? Where was it kept? How do you think the wearer would react to about the cape's discovery? How do you think the wearer feels would feel about the cape being on display?



3. Excavate your own treasure! We used a giant play tray with mud and compost to excavate our treasure. Digger and dumper trucks optional!

4. Use play dough or make your own salt dough to create the patterns from the cape.



Find out more:

[https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=808751&partId=1](https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=808751&partId=1)

<https://museum.wales/cardiff/whatson/6735/The-Mold-Gold-Cape/>

[https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/museum/treasures/moldcape\\_e.pdf](https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/museum/treasures/moldcape_e.pdf)