

## The Story of the Site – Material and Immaterial Heritage Framework

### *Hunebedcentrum, Borger (NL)*

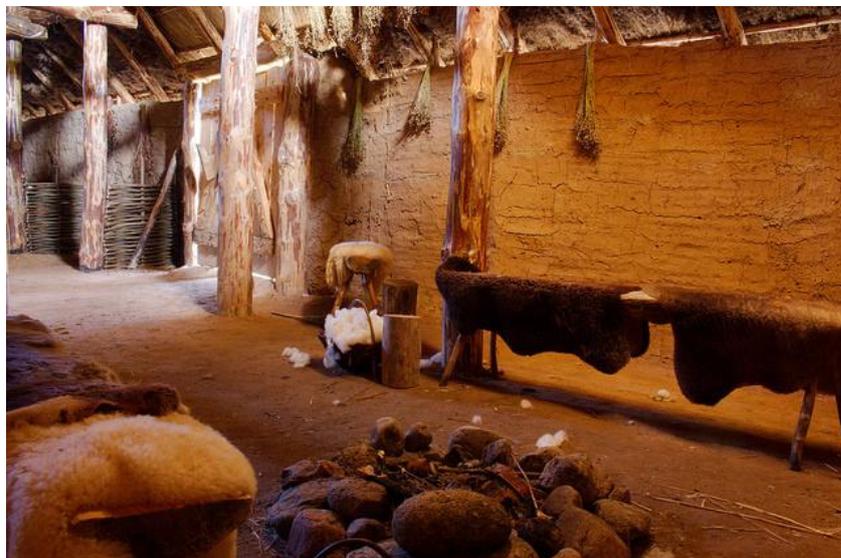
#### *Iron Age House*

Hunebedcentrum / Prehistoric Park

Inventory Number : **OP-12**

Name of the reconstruction : **Iron Age House**

#### Photos





<https://www.flickr.com/photos/40865023@N03/albums/72157640891444983>

## Description of the reconstruction

From summer till winter 2014 there has been built a prehistoric house from the Iron age in the prehistoric park of the Hunebedcentrum in Borger. The original remains were found during the excavations on the Hondrug, the same region as where the Hunebedcentrum is located. The type of house plan is named Hijken, after its first finding in the village Hijken. This house plan is found in Noordbarge, namely: *Noordbarge 12*.

The house can be dated in the mid-Iron Age, maybe till the late Iron Age. The technique for making iron was known in the Bronze Age, but the new metal only hit from about 800 BC in use in the Netherlands. Iron is also in our country, usually as bog iron ore. It is formed in stream valleys and swamps.

There was more than enough in prehistoric bog iron ore to make iron, though it was not of very good quality. Yet it was the farmers who lived here an important material. Iron axes and points of teams made it easier to work on the land, and everyone could freely use it. Probably names during the Iron Age the proceeds of the fields then too. This also could grow the population, and therefore the prehistoric society gradually became more complicated. There is in the archaeological record anyway not much to notice.

The people were mostly farmers who lived in small settlements with one or a few farms. They kept cattle there: especially cows, with addition of sheep, goats and pigs. Some had horses (the horse was known in the Netherlands since the end of the New Stone Age). They cultivated mainly wheat, barley, beans and oilseeds.

Like at the end of the Bronze Age they buried their dead, but the urn fields were about 450 BC out of use. At the end of the Iron Age, in the first century BC, increased tensions in society, probably because of the threat of the Romans.

In the Iron Age farmers developed in the sandy soils a new farming system . They explained square fields of about 40 x 40 meters, with a little wall around it. That prevented atomization of the ground. The fields were alternately planted with different crops , and some lay fallow . There, farmers let cattle graze or they built new farms . In the course of time arose whole field complexes of dozens of hectares , where the settlement was situated . Archaeologists call these lands Celtic fields as they used to be (wrongly) thought that the Celts had invented this farming system.

### Further Reading and Sources

- H.T. Waterbolk, 2009. *Getimmerd verleden: sporen van voor- en vroeghistorische houtbouw op de zand- en kleigronden tussen Eems en Ijssel*. University of Groningen, Groningen.
- Huijts, C.S.T.J. 1992: De voor-historische boerderijbouw in Drenthe. Reconstructiemodellen van 1300 vóór tot 1300 na Chr. Arnhem.
- Kooijmans, L.L., 2005. *Nederland in de prehistorie*. Bert Bakker, Leiden.