

The Storegga Slide

Doggerland has proven to be a rich archaeological resource; the now submerged landmass continuing to produce an array of artefacts from a period when the area was mostly low-lying tundra. This area in the North Sea has become a crucial repository not just for archaeological purposes, but also as a trigger that ruptures the common consciousness that history is beneath us, not between us. The discovery of axe heads, skeletons (human and animal), headdresses and other carved implements, preserved and petrified in the banks of silt and peat, infers to a history before Britain was separated from mainland Europe, thus remapping an alternative formation between land and water. Once occupied land without the distinctions of political borders or nations, Doggerland was more than simply a 'bridge'; it had a centrality of its own. The land itself profited from the Thames, Scheldt, Rhine and Meuse joining inland, before flowing into the channel, enrichening the earth and creating many lagoons, marshes and beachland.

The majority of artefacts found from the Doggerland site have been traced back to a time period around 10 000 - 6500 BC, or more specifically, pre- Storegga Slide. The Storegga Slide was a monumental landslide, occurring underwater off the coast of western Norway. It is hypothesised that the shift in land mass was so great that the knock-on tsunami effect was enough to eventually wash out the remaining low-level Doggerland, which had gradually become a series of islands situated between the British Isles and mainland Europe as sea levels rose. Amongst some scholars, the Slide marks the separation of Britain from mainland Europe and also the endpoint of the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) era, before the onset of the Neolithic. This event dramatically impacted on the cultures of early settlers, the migration of peoples and the adapted technologies exchanged and utilised around Northern Europe.

Today, though no longer visible by naked eye nor satellite Doggerland continues to provide unique evidence of what was once inhabited land. Combined with the existing coastline areas of northern Europe, the area purported an 'Eden-like' environment, with conditions ripe for hunting and, temporarily before all inhabitants abandoned the islands, land sustenance. Though Doggerland was topographically weak with regards to resisting rising sea levels and the Storegga Slide, geographically the land was well sited for the progression of ancient societies.

Doggerland is a state of mind.