

RENNESOY IN THE GOLDEN DAYS

Rennesøy island is situated the farthest north of the outer Ryfylke fjords, and is about 15 km long. It stretches towards west-northwest where there is a beautiful view towards Bokn and Karmøy islands, towards Kvitsøy islands and in west, the North Sea itself. There is the flat land around Galta and Reianes, and the more uneven & rugged ground further east, reaching a height of 234 m.

It is a long time since the first people set their feet on Rennsøy. At least 4-5000 yrs ago. There is not much trace of these people, ruins or graves that we know of. But about 30 objects made from stone and flint from the stoneage has been found all over the island. The houses have been very primitive, probably not only huts from earth, but also four-walled houses.

These objects are not the oldest objects found in the county of Rogaland, but it is expected that more objects might still be found. For fisherman & people using boats, Rennesøy and Mosterøy must have been a natural place to settle.

Arrow-points made from slate, and stone-axes from different kind of stones were found in a heap of stones, or in the earth in several places. These things are quite usual in Rogaland, but the oldest have, up to now, been found on Jaeren. These objects are very professionally made & some are even decorated. All these things have been handed in to Stavanger Museum. It is strange to think that these things were made and belonged to the first people who came to Rennesøy's virgin earth. It is most certainly the same race as live there today, although there has been other tribes later. They have probably known cows and sheep and have been clothed in wool. A chisel and knife made from flint indicates that they also must have grown grain, probably rye.

From about 1500 B.C. until 500 A.D. was the bronze-age. As we had neither copper nor pewter in Norway, in order to make bronze, we had to get this from Middle Europe. There was therefore very few tools made from Bronze. However, one object has been found on Rennesøy. Although there is no memorials from the stone age on Rennesøy, there are several from the bronze age. It is a general opinion that all these piles of stone which we find several places, are graves from the bronze age. All the rock carvings usually made on solid mountain rocks belong to the bronze age. These carvings are mostly figures of boats, but also deeper round carvings (ceremonial bowls) which is meant to have religious meaning. There has only been one of these found on Rennesøy. During the bronze age there was probably higher and lower classes among the people. The higher class owned bronze objects and were buried with these in the pile of stone. Later, about 1000 B.C. they started burning the corpses. The bones were put in a small grave made from stones, and put into a smaller pile of stone than they used before.

The iron age started in the time around the birth of Christ. Now the tools were made from iron which we had a lot of in Norway. There hasn't been found many objects from this time on Rennesøy. However, one rare neck ring made from bronze with some decoration on it was found. Probably from the time of the Romans. One more rig and four jetsons (chess pieces) made from blue glass were also found. The game that these pieces belonged to was known by the Romans and brought here by the Germans and then the Danes. These objects show that there has been quite high standards of living on Rennesøy.