



GALLICA

Historical & Archaeological Interpretation

World of the Ancient Britons

Early Shoes 3000 BC – 500 AD



The Author.

I have been working in experimental archaeology for over 25 years. For many of those years I have been wearing reproduction shoes during working sessions. In the process of wearing-out three or four pairs a year, I have a fair idea of the comfort and fit of hand-made shoes, and the time and effort to make them.

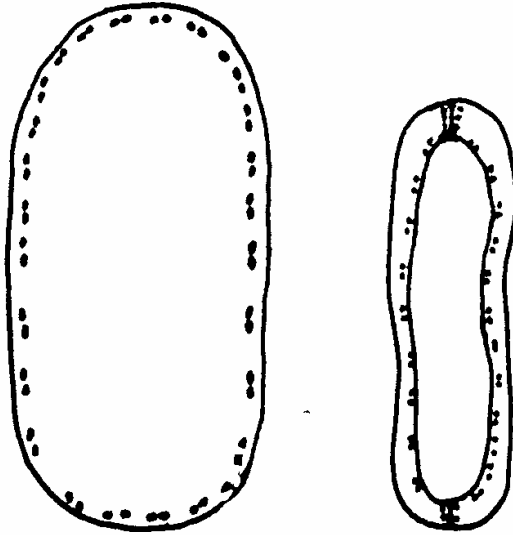
David Freeman

Shoes in prehistory

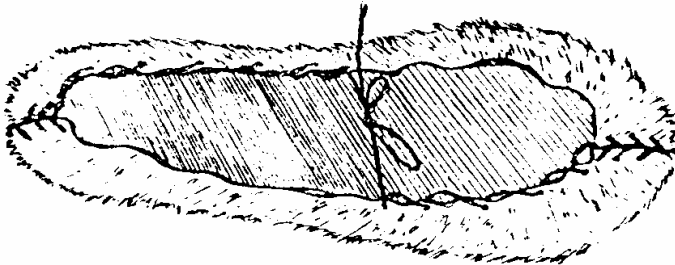
The simple need for a way to keep the feet warm in a cold climate, drove the early peoples into inventing first the foot wrap, and then a shaped bag to hold insulation. All over the world there are examples of shoes in the archaeology. This short publication is an attempt to bring some of that information together into one place. There is a heavy bias towards graphics, as we are all familiar with foot-wear, and a written explanation is deemed unnecessary. There are however, short texts to inform you where and when these examples are from.

Most shoes and boots are made of animal skins, with or without hair on. There are, as always, exceptions to the rule, and there are examples of woven grass and other fibres. The information that follows is based on finds from around the world, with a strong leaning to Northern Europe.

The first and simplest is the ‘pampootie’
This example is from central European Neolithic to
Bronze Age. The shoes is thonged up the front and
back, and along the upper edges.



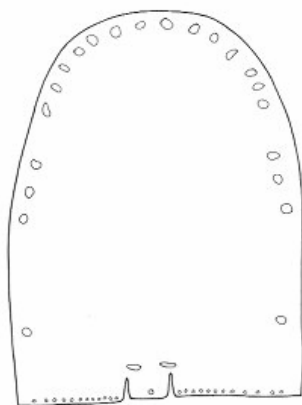
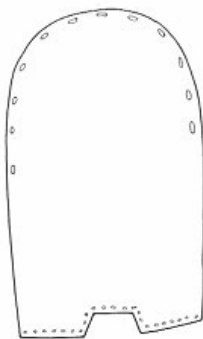
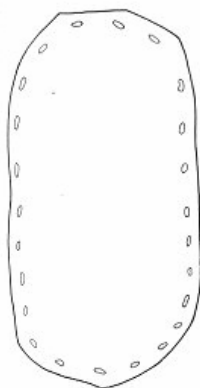
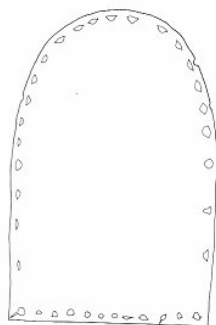
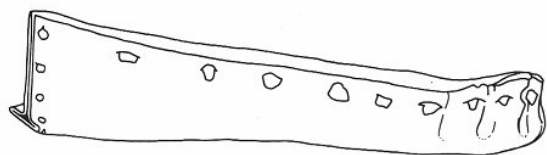
This is a relatively modern version from Ireland

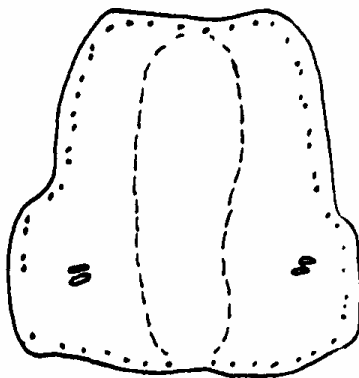
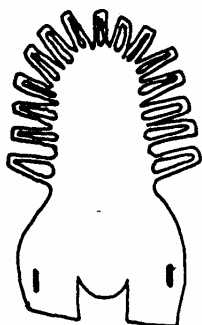


All of these are from the Danish Bronze Age.

Note the pampootie style again.

The thonging can be thin strips of leather, or a thread made of sinew.

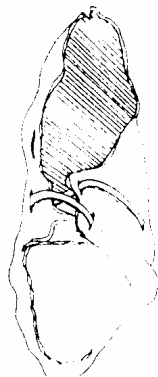
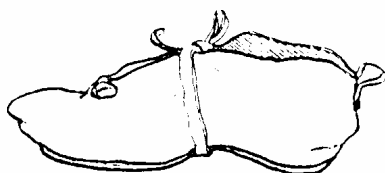
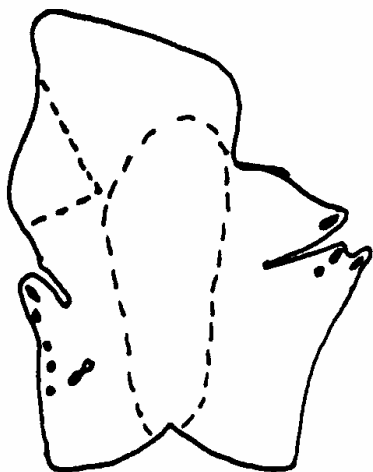




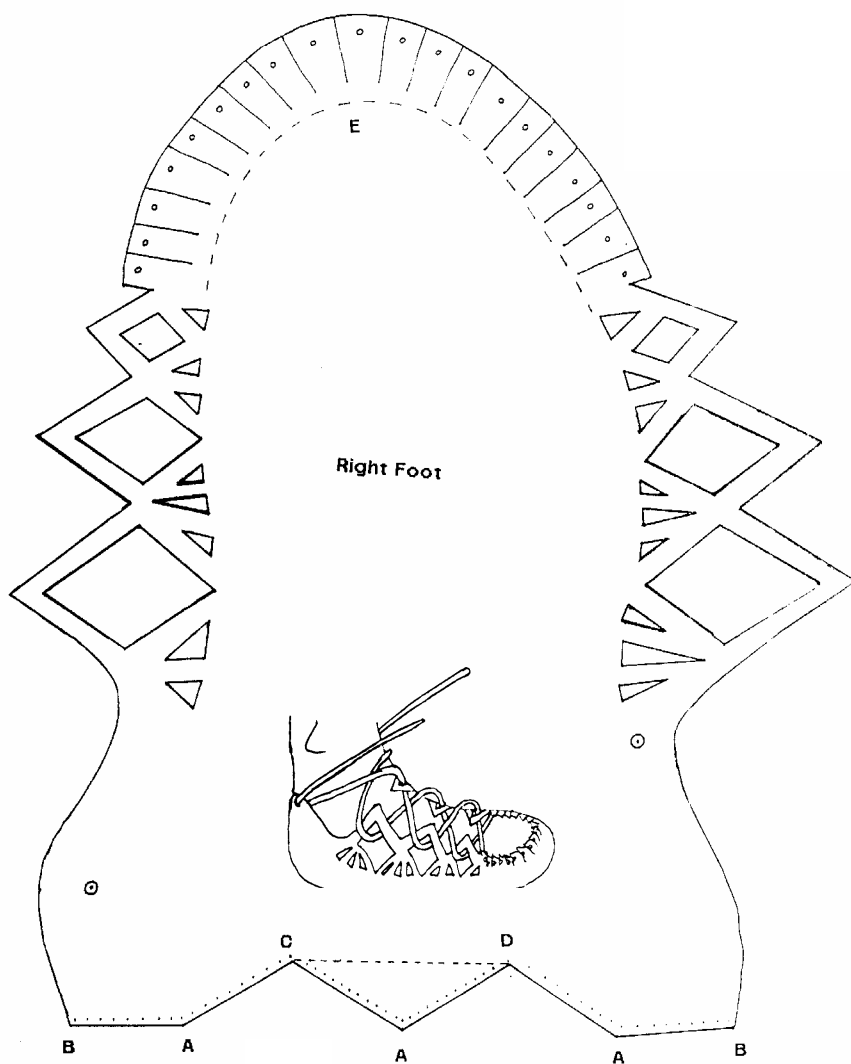
European Bronze \ Iron Age

Top shoe source R. Scott & B. Davies

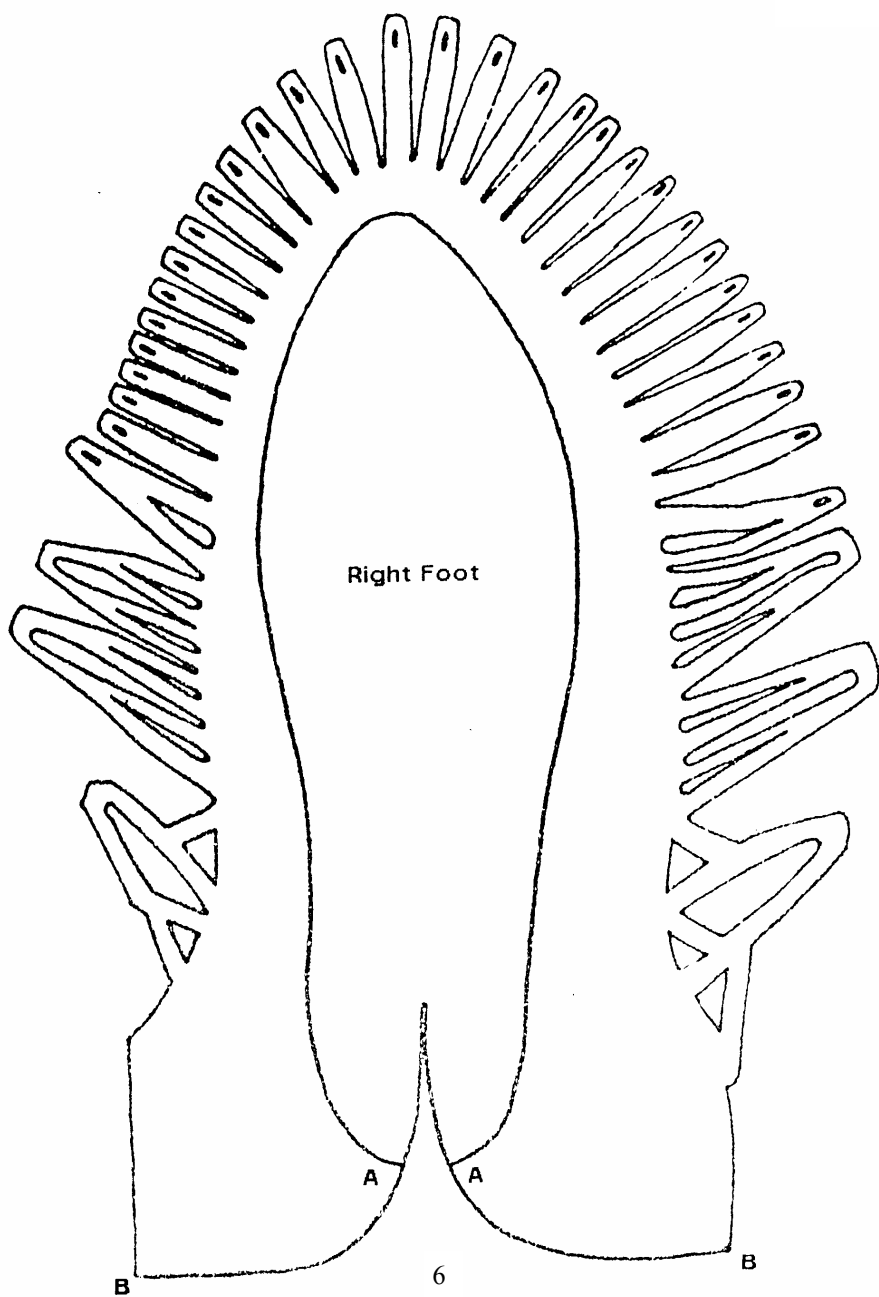
Bottom shoe from Rønjern Mose



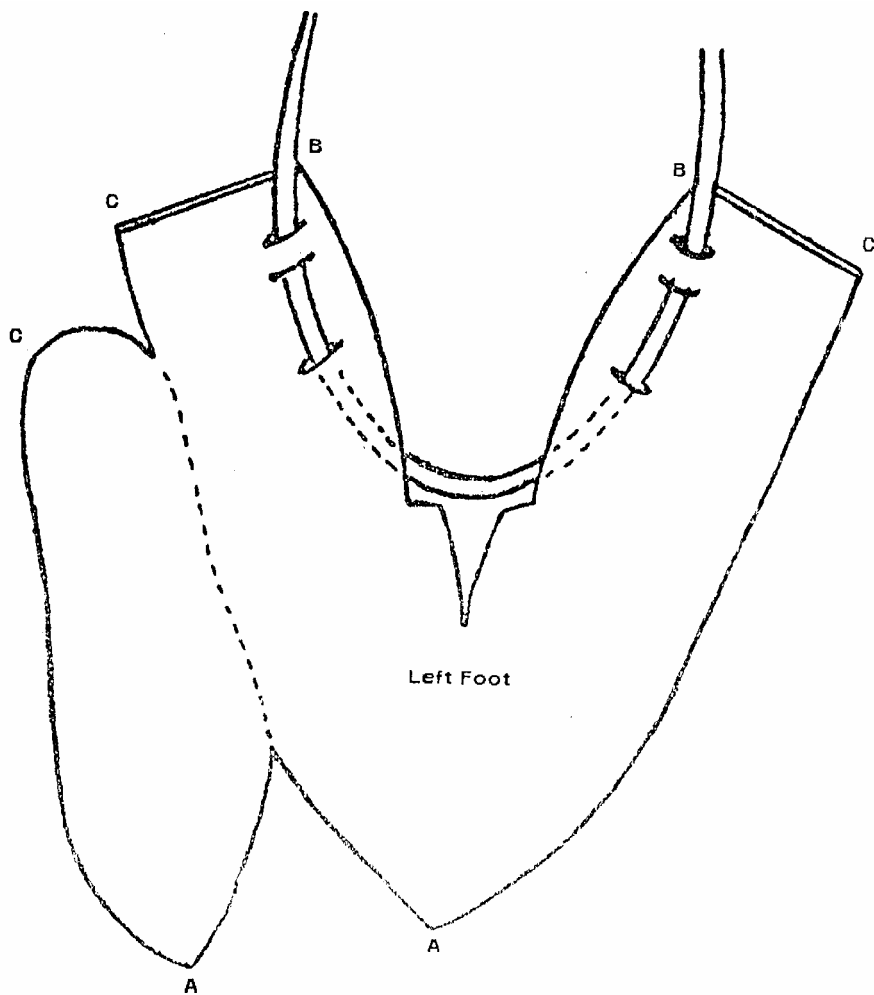
Mosgard Sandal – Danish
Bronze \ Iron Age



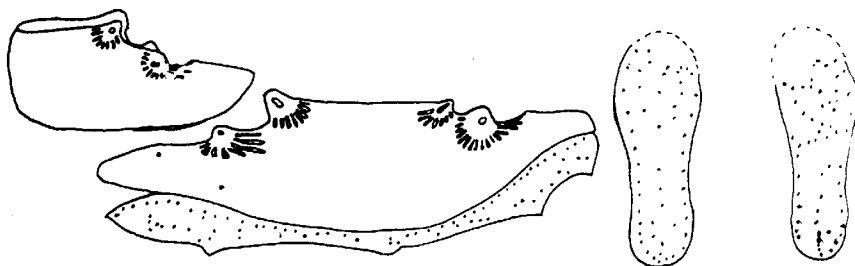
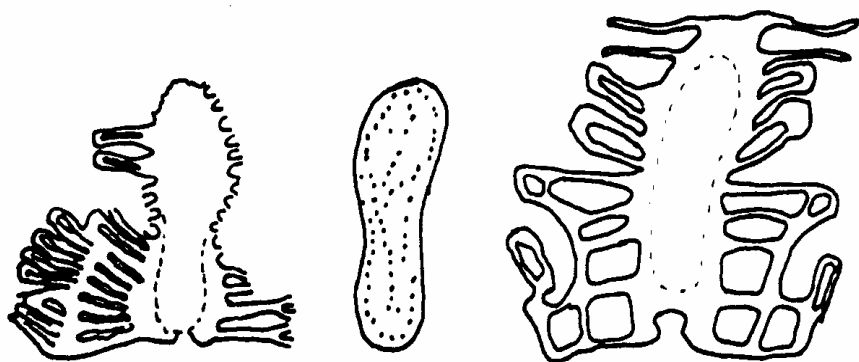
German Sandal Bronze \ Iron Age



German one piece upper and sole
Iron Age



Assorted shoes – central Europe
Roman



World of the Ancient Britons

Also in the series

How to build a Round House

Warriors & Weapons

Early Prehistoric Shelters

Iron Age Clothing



© GALLICA 2004

E-mail dfreeman@gallica.co.uk

Find **World of the Ancient Britons** on the Web at www.gallica.co.uk