

# WHAT THE BADGERS

## SAW 2

The Romans Are Coming!



Hello, Motte and Bailey here again. We'll tell you a bit about when the Romans came to County Durham.



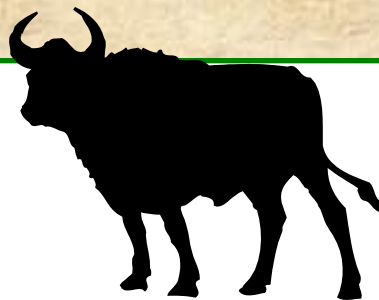
I'm often 'Roman' around. Get it?

Our sett is close to an old Roman fort. Around AD 43, the Romans decided to conquer Britain. Up here in the North East a tribe called the Brigantes ruled. Oh, but they were tough and wild! They were very warlike, and used iron Age chariots and weapons.

When they weren't fighting, they raised cattle here, in the hills. (The Romans used this later, to make leather equipment for their troops.)

Near Scotch Corner, the Brigantes had a fort in a place called Stanwick. It was huge - a mile wide and 1 ½ miles long. It had huge ramparts and a ditch nearly 20 metres wide.

**What can you find out about the Brigantes?**



When the Romans arrived, the tribe was ruled by a queen called Cartimandua. She made peace with the Romans, but her tribe were not too keen on the situation! The people turned against her when she tried to force them to remain at peace.

The Romans helped her twice, to put down revolts against her. The second revolt was led by her own husband, Venutius. She divorced him and married the man who carried his armour!



But, in 69 AD, the Brigantes supported Venutius against Cartimandua. The Romans rescued her and fought against Venutius. They invaded Brigantian territory and built a fort at Brough. Stanwick was destroyed and the Romans took most of the Brigantes' lands.

Quite a gal, our Cartimandua!



Eight years later, the Romans were back! This time, they were led by a very famous Roman called Agricola. He took his armies across the Tees and Tyne and into the Cheviot Hills. He marched northwards, across the River Tweed and into 'Caledonia', (Scotland). As they moved northwards, Agricola's men built roads and forts, and our region became a part of the Roman Empire. [Look up Agricola on the web.](#)

Some of our ancestors remember Agricola coming here!



Our home is close to the Roman fort at Binchester, in County Durham, (or Vinovia, as the Romans called it.) Binchester was once the largest Roman fort in County Durham. The Fort was built in the second half of the first century AD, on **Dere Street**, to guard the crossing of the River Wear. At first, the fort was built in wood, but when the Romans knew they would be in the area for a long time, it was rebuilt in stone. These buildings included a commandant's house at the heart of the fort and a well-appointed baths building. It had a **hypocaust**, or underground heating system. (Who says central heating is a modern invention?!)

The soldiers in this fort did not come from this area, they came from all over the Roman Empire. We know that a **cavalry** unit from Spain was here in the 2nd century AD and that a unit originally made up of Dutch tribesmen was here in the 3rd century AD.



Find out about the words in blue.

Once the Romans had gone, the Anglos Saxons took over and knocked down a lot of the fort to build other things.

Archaeologists are often here, digging to find historical things in the soil. You would probably enjoy a visit to Binchester

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/binchester.fort/>  
<http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=6646>



The Romans built lots of roads for their soldiers to walk on. They also built the famous 'Hadrian's Wall' in Northumberland. But that didn't end the problem of the wild locals for the Romans.

At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD, another Emperor came to Britain, His name was Severus. He fought against the tribes, but died at York before the wars were over.

However, soon there was a long time of peace in northern Britain.

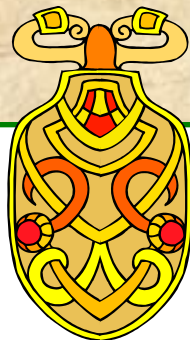


At the end of the Roman period, here, new problems arose. Northern Britain was attacked by sea pirates!!! Some were Picts and some Anglo-Saxons. Yet again, fierce fighting broke out!

The ordinary people, who had been living outside the large forts had to move inside, as it was no longer safe!

At the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, the Romans Were becoming fed up with the wild locals. They took their soldiers away from Britain to use them in other places.

Now the Britons had to take look after themselves!



Why not find out about any Roman settlements where you live? Then come and visit ours at Binchester.