

# Romans and Anglo-Saxons

The ancient **Romans** were based in Rome in Italy but they ruled over land that stretched far beyond the borders of Rome. This was called the **Roman Empire** and it covered large parts of land all around the Mediterranean Sea – and even part of Great Britain.

The Romans got this land mostly by fighting battles with other groups of people, like the Celts in Britain. When the Romans won, they'd get more territory to add to the Empire. This meant that Roman culture had a huge influence on other cultures, and it's why finding Roman artefacts (like coins), and ruins of Roman walls and buildings (like Hadrian's Wall) is so common in the British Isles today. The Romans also brought a varied diet with them including flat bread, which was made without yeast like lots of modern breads.

## This map shows how much of Europe and Britain the Roman Empire covered



## The Romans Invade!

In **AD43**, the full might of the Roman army landed on the beaches in Kent. Over the next year it battled inland, storming through hillforts and chopping down anyone who stood in their way.

The Romans wanted Britain's precious metals. However, they weren't just a destructive force. When the Romans came they modernised Britain forever. They taught them about hygiene, about clean drinking water, a calendar, laws and legal system. They also introduced new infrastructure such as straight roads, central heating, aqueducts as well as concrete. You may still see some Roman numerals around today and some of the words we use are taken from Latin which is the language that they spoke in Ancient Rome.

## Key figures in Roman Britain.

### Boudicca

Boudicca was the queen of the Iceni tribe in the South of England. There were no pictures of her but she was described as having long red hair that flowed beyond her waist. When her husband died the Romans tried to conquer the Iceni tribe but Boudicca rallied the Celtic tribes against the Romans. The Emperor sent the Roman governor Paulinus with the Ninth Legion army to fight Boudicca's rebellion.



### Emperor Claudius

Claudius was the fourth Roman emperor from 41 to 54 A.D. He was best known for the successful expansion of Rome into Britain and parts of Africa and the Middle East, Claudius was an accomplished leader.



## Roman Towns

The Romans built Britain's first towns. They built towns all over Britain as centres to administer the people they had conquered. Within 17 years of the invasion, they had several major towns in place connected by the famous Roman roads. The Romans liked everything to be organised and orderly. Streets were laid out in neat, straight lines, like on a chess-board. In the middle there was a large square called the forum. It was used as a market place and for meetings. It had shops and offices on three sides and government offices on the other side.

Many towns had running water and sewers. Aqueducts were bridges for bringing water to the towns. Only the rich had water piped to their houses; everyone else used water from public fountains. The only toilets were public lavatories, which were built around the town and connected to underground sewers.



## Children in Ancient Rome

When living in an Ancient Roman family, the father was in charge of the household and so the children would always listen to the father. The father would even decide what the children would dress like. If the children were disobedient, they could also be sent away from the family.

The father would decide what kind of education the children in the home would have. If the family were wealthy, the boy children would get a chance to either get a tutor or go to school in a schoolhouse. Boys would also learn how to fight and to be warriors in case they ever had to go to war. Girls were taught differently and they were only taught to read and write and then take on household chores.

## Hadrian's Wall

Hadrian's Wall was a barrier that the Roman Empire built to keep invaders from the north out of the Roman province of Britain. It stretched across northern Britain for 73 miles (118 kilometres) from coast to coast. Hadrian's Wall was in use almost until the end of Roman rule in Britain in 410. Hadrian's Wall was so well built that you can still go and see parts of it today, almost 2,000 years after it was built!



By 700 AD, what is now England, and part of Scotland, would be divided into 7 Kingdoms:

Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, Sussex, Kent, Essex and East Anglia

## Anglo-Saxons

By 410AD, the last of the Romans had left Britain to defend their home territory as they were under increasing threat from external invaders. This meant Britain was left to its own devices for the first time in about 400 years of protection under Roman rule. The British were quite unprepared for fighting!

Many tribes had been invading Britain for some time, including Picts and Scots, and without Roman protection they proved to be a formidable force against the Brits.

These invaders are known to us as The Anglo-Saxons because the two biggest invading tribes were the Angles and the Saxons.



### AD43

100 years after Julius Caesar leaves Britain, the new emperor, Claudius, invades with an army of about 40,000 that included Elephants! After a battle the Romans establish a capital at Colchester.



### AD73

The Romans conquer Wales. The last major rebellion is by a tribe living in Anglesey and Snowdonia. After they are defeated, the Romans build forts across Wales.

### AD82

The Romans consider conquering Ireland. Roman artefacts have been found on fortified sites in Ireland, but it is unclear whether this is evidence of trade, diplomacy or military activity.

### AD138

After Hadrian's death the new emperor, Antoninus Pius, basically abandons Hadrian's Wall and builds a new wall called the Antonine Wall.

### AD208

The Emperor Septimius Severus leads several campaigns in Scotland. After Severus's death in York in AD211, the campaigns are abandoned along with most of the Roman forts in Scotland.

### AD306

Constantine 'the Great' is declared Emperor in York. Having fought a civil war he believes his victory was aided by God and in thanks, he becomes a Christian.

### AD410

The last of the Romans leave Britain as Roman troops are sent back to the continent to defend other areas of The Empire against Barbarian invasions. Roman rule ends in Britain and the Anglo Saxon era begins in AD450.

### AD60

The Iceni tribe are rebelling under the leadership of Queen Boudicca. Her army of Iceni tribesmen and women capture and burn the towns of Colchester and London. An estimated 70,000 to 80,000 Romans and Britons are killed.



### AD79

Agricola, whilst governor of Roman Britain, attempts to conquer Scotland for Rome, but is unsuccessful.



### AD122

Emperor Hadrian begins work on Hadrian's Wall. It was used for military control and trade. It is a common misconception that the wall marks the Scottish border it lies, in fact, totally within England.



### AD164

Antoninus was unable to conquer the Northern Tribes so when Marcus Aurelius became emperor he abandoned the Antonine Wall and reoccupied Hadrian's Wall.

### AD216

In order to better control Britain, the Romans divided the country in two.

### AD313

Constantine announces that Christianity will be tolerated across The Empire for the first time in its history. In AD324 he becomes the sole Emperor of the Roman Empire.

AD1      AD100      AD200      AD300      AD400