

MENSTON HERITAGE GROUP

Roman Britain

In Roman times, which lasted over 300 years from the 1st century CE until the end of the 4th century, there is likely to have been little in the way of settlement in and around Menston as we now know it, apart from a few scattered agricultural homesteads.

The local tribespeople in Yorkshire, the Brigantes, resisted the Romans. So they found it necessary to establish a strong military base in York, and further forts across the North.

An important East/West Roman military road ran through this area linking the Roman fort in Ilkley, and the settlement which grew up round it, with forts/settlements in Adel, Newton Kyme, Tadcaster and York.

Archeological evidence along the route at Adel Beck suggests that for at least part of the route, the Romans may have followed the line of an earlier iron age track along the line of the Wharfe Valley.

Going eastwards, the line of the road has been established going up the Chevin from the field above

Westfield Farm Kennels. Looking uphill, it runs at an angle to the right (South), away from the present Yorkgate, towards East Carlton. The line of the road is shown by a dotted line on the 1851 Ordnance Survey Map reproduced below.

Going west, the line is less certain, but it's likely to have followed the uphill line straight down the hill past Oaks Farm, and to have crossed the main A6038 Otley Road at Eller Ghyll. From there it seems to have continued in a straight line towards Scalebor Park in Burley in Wharfedale, and onwards to Ben Rhydding and Ilkley.

In later years, trade flowed in Britain to and from all parts of the Roman Empire. Wine, olive oil, and pottery and other goods came from abroad.

But there was also internal trade within Britain of goods such as pottery, glassware and metalwork made here. For example, jewellery made from Whitby jet spread throughout Britain, and as far as central Germany and France.

So as well as soldiers and officials, merchants traders and skilled craftspeople would have used the road to travel across the country.



For further information see;

Treasures of Roman Yorkshire by Adam Parker

Roadsofromanbritain.org

Roman Ilkley by E M Fletcher 1965

*Six inch Ordnance Survey Map of England and Wales
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