

Ellingham and Kirby Cane became part of the great Roman Empire. There is thought to have been a road from Kirby Cane running towards Reedham Ferry, but as roads locally were built of compacted gravel, very few have survived the plough. We probably had a homestead, and possibly a few patrolling soldiers, mixed with a gradually romanised native population. The strongest presence seems to have been in the first and second centuries. We have had local finds of a Roman Dolphin brooch and coins of the era of Constantius Chlorus and Antoninus Pius. We have as yet very little evidence of Roman building, but there are indications perhaps of a dwelling on the Geldeston side of Leet Hill, and possibly (?) a temple above the water course to the east of Wardley Hill and a kiln for/of Roman tiles near Pewter Hill.



There was certainly a settlement of potters on the valley edge near the river in Ellingham in c. 170-190 AD, who made flagons and bowls but specialised in making mortaria. These were mixing bowls which had hard stony material fired into their bases so that food could be ground in them. Three potters have been identified; Regalis, Lunauc(is) and one who used a herringbone stamp. Despite this, there does not seem to have been a settlement.

Regalis (160—200AD) seems to have come from Colchester, and brooches from Colchester have also been found on the other side of the parish. This can perhaps be considered as Ellingham's first industrial site. It seems we were in contact with the rest of Roman Britain, and thereby, with the Roman world. So, when the new Christian religion began to replace the pantheon of Roman gods and no doubt a few left over Celtic ones, it spread to our shores, and, though they were persecuted until the reign of Constantine (312). No doubt there were many Christians in Ellingham by the end of the Roman era

270 —  
285

Burgh Castle (Gariannonum) was built to defend the coast from Germanic raiders. It had a harbour on the eastern side, but sea levels were beginning to fall. Being so close to the estuary, our river would have made an easy route for invaders.

406

The Greek historian, Zosimus tells us that at this time the army set up an emperor of their own - in fact three, the first two of who only lasted a matter of months before being killed by their followers. The third, a common soldier called himself Contantius III. In 407 he led the army out of England to defend Gaul, leaving the province to be defended by its Romano-British residents. Three years later the real Emperor, Honorius, whose empire was falling apart, had written to tell his province that as far as defence was concerned, we were on our own. We do not know who took over the reins then, but the Romano-British fought hard to defend themselves were overwhelmed.

Once there was no fear of Roman armies coming to our defence, the Angles and Saxons after all their raiding, could finally settle down without too much opposition. Initially there were probably hundreds of small tribal kingdoms, but gradually they coalesced into larger units. Soon afterwards local settlers were making ornaments out of Roman coins. At first the new wave of settlers were pagans. They often cremated their dead, and buried the ashes in urns accompanied by weapons and personal ornaments. Local settlers practiced inhumation. The new by-pass cut through such a cemetery. A find made in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was misinterpreted as being Roman, and the story has grown locally representing a few bones and spears as six fully armoured Roman soldiers. Sadly, nothing so interesting has yet been discovered

