



**yorkshire museum & gardens**

## **Looking for Romans in the Museum Gardens**

We know that the Romans arrived in York about 2000 years ago. The military arrived first and built a fortress here. Soon afterwards a civilian colony rose up outside the fortress walls. The Roman name for the city was Eboracum. It was a very big, busy and important Roman site!

The evidence for the Romans living in York is not just inside the Yorkshire Museum – it is all around it!

### **1) Evidence above ground**

Face the front of the museum then walk beyond the tree-line to your right. There you will find the Multangular Tower. This was one of the corners of the Roman fortress wall. The smaller stones on the bottom of the tower and the row of clay tiles are Roman in date. The layers or larger stones at the top of the tower are a later medieval addition.

### **2) Relocated evidence**

Follow the track between the museum and the tower then take the narrow path uphill and through the wall. You are now standing inside the Roman fortress! Inside and around the Multangular Tower are several stone troughs. These are actually Roman coffins. They are not from this site however. The coffins were found near the present day site of York Railway Station in Victorian Times and moved here as interesting features for people visiting the gardens to look at.

### **3) Evidence underground**

Go back into the Museum Gardens and follow the path that runs in front of the Multangular Tower and away from the museum to the main gateway on Museum Street. Once you reach the gates turn as though you have just entered the gardens and walk in as straight a line as possible across the gardens to the opposite gateway on Marygate. This is the line of a Roman road. You have just marched in the footsteps of the Romans!

Now walk back into the gardens a short way and follow the footpath uphill to the ruins of St Mary's Abbey, a Medieval Benedictine monastery. The visible ruin is the remaining wall of the abbey church and dates to the late 1200s. This site was occupied long before the arrival of the Medieval monks though – portions of Roman mosaic floors were discovered in this area by early archaeological excavations. The identity of the building remains a mystery – was it a private villa or a public building? What do you think?