

## Links to the ancient Romans in Brixham

While most of the links below are anecdotal; that is, told by local people by word of mouth and local folklore, we should start with the factual link.

### **Roman presence at Berry Head**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was widely believed in the local area that Vespasian and Titus landed at Berry Head during the Roman conquest (specifically at St Marys Beach to the south of Berry Head)

[http://llwsdv.esdm.co.uk/LLFiles/32861/full\\_32861.pdf](http://llwsdv.esdm.co.uk/LLFiles/32861/full_32861.pdf)

Prehistoric remains and settlement is well attested from Middle Palaeolithic times (250,000 – 40,000 BC) with three solution caves being discovered in the 19th century: Ash Hole Cavern; Brixham, or Windmill, Cavern; and Bench Cavern. Ash Hole (or Ashole) was investigated by the Revd Henry Francis Lyte in 1824; beneath stalagmites he uncovered the bones of elephant, reindeer and hyena species. In upper layers of the cave earth well above the stalagmite floor, pottery, bronze metalwork, a Roman coin and human remains were found. In the 1960s the site was re-investigated and it was established that it had been used as rock shelter with occupation from the Neolithic (4000 – 2200 BC), Bronze Age (2200 – 700 BC) and Roman periods. The majority of the pottery dated to the Bronze Age and was analogous to Cornish Trevisker ware of 1750-1000 BC. The burials recognised by Lyte have been broadly assigned a Romano-British date of c.AD 0- 500.

(<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/media/7579/higher-brixham-caa.pdf>)



### **Ghosts – Berry Head Road**

While speaking to locals and researching Roman links to Brixham, a local lady told us about a local legend that on Berry Head Road; the road that leads past the hotel from the town to the headland, there have been sightings of the ghosts of Roman soldiers, including sightings by family of hers. We have been unable to find any other mention of this legend, but for what it's worth, we have included this.

### **Romans at Exeter**

The most commonly known history of the Romans in Devon, is that they had a fort and town at Exeter, known at the time as Isca Dumnoniorum. It was founded in around AD55 and was fortified by the Second Augustan Legion, and takes its name from the Latinisation of the name Dumnonii, which is the Celtic tribe who inhabited Devon and Cornwall.