

## **Goldsborough Roman Signal Station (site\* of scheduled monument)**

The following information is taken from Historic England's website

### **"Reasons for Designation**

Roman signal stations were rectangular towers of stone or wood situated within ditched, embanked, palisaded or walled enclosures. They were built by the Roman army for military observation and signalling by means of fire or smoke. They normally formed an element of a wider system of defence and signalling between military sites such as forts and camps and towns, generally as part of a chain of stations to cover long distances. In northern England stations were used in particular to augment the main frontier formed by Hadrian's Wall, but elsewhere stations were constructed along the coast to keep lookout over the sea and to signal information both along the coast and to inland sites. Signal stations were constructed and used in Britain mainly during three distinct periods. The earliest examples were built between AD 50 and AD 117 for use during the earliest military campaigns during the conquest period. Signal stations at this period took the form of a wooden tower surrounded by a ditch and bank and possibly a slight timber palisade. After AD 117 towers were more usually built in stone, some on the same site as earlier timber towers. The latest series, in the mid-4th century AD, were more substantial stone signal stations built mainly along the Yorkshire coast. These had a tower up to 30m high which was surrounded by a curtain wall and external ditch. Signal stations survive as low earthworks, or their below ground remains may be identified on aerial photographs. Fewer than 50 examples have been identified in England. As one of a small group of Roman military monuments, which are important in representing army strategy, government policy and the pattern of military control, signal stations are of importance to our understanding of the period. All Roman signal stations with surviving archaeological remains are considered to be nationally important.

Despite excavation, archaeological deposits providing information about the structure and use of the Roman signal station 130m south east of Scratch Alley will survive intact. Information relating to earlier occupation of the site will survive beneath extant walls, foundations and surfaces and important environmental evidence for the contemporary environment and economy will be preserved within the ditch fills. The signal station at Goldsborough, 130m south east of Scratch Alley is one in a chain of five distributed along the north east Yorkshire coast. The study of these related sites will provide valuable insight into the nature and duration of the occupation of this area during the late Roman period and the causes of its decline thereafter.

### **Details**

The monument includes a Roman signal station situated in a prominent position above the cliffs of the north east Yorkshire coast. The signal station is visible as a square mound measuring up to 30m across and standing up to 1.4m high. It has rounded corners and a top which is generally level, although there are surface irregularities. Excavation in 1918 exposed the foundations and surviving fragments of a stone wall strengthened by circular bastions at the corners, which surrounded a courtyard with the footings and lower courses of a square stone tower in the centre. The entrance to the courtyard was through a gateway in the south side and the entrance to the tower was opposite the gateway. The surviving mound covers these remains. The excavation also exposed a well within the courtyard and this is still visible as a hollow in the south east corner of the mound. Originally the outer wall was surrounded by a berm 10m wide and a ditch 3.6m wide, with a bridge allowing access across the ditch to the entrance. The berm survives as a roughly level area around the mound, measuring 8m-10m across, but the ditch is no longer visible as an earthwork, having silted up over the years and subsequently been ploughed over since the medieval period. The 1918 excavators concluded that the signal station had been short lived and had been destroyed suddenly towards the end of the 4th century AD."

\* Grid reference: NZ8352915134