

# NORWICH SCENES

## The Roman town



About three miles south of Norwich is the little village of Caistor St Edmunds. Here, between the ancient church, nestling amongst trees, and the little River Tas, can be seen the rectangular outline of the Roman town of Venta Icenorum. Little can be seen above the ground, just a few remnants of the outer wall, as shown in our picture. From the air, however, the shadowy outline of a town can be seen, with its grid pattern of streets, several temples and the forum, or marketplace. The inset picture gives an artist's impression of what it would have looked like in its heyday. We are familiar with the idea of the Roman Empire being the iron power of the image of Daniel 2, and the fourth beast of Daniel 7, described as "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly" (v. 7). Here locally we have a reminder of the extent of that power, far away from its centre in what is now Italy.

The Romans first invaded Britain in 55 B.C. under Julius Caesar, but the process of subduing and conquering the land began in A.D. 43 under the Emperor Claudius, mentioned in Acts 11:28. At that time East Anglia was ruled by the Iceni tribe, which fiercely resisted the Romans at first, but later their king, Prasutagus, acknowledged Roman rule and at his death left the kingdom jointly to the Romans and his own two daughters. The Romans treated the two daughters and their mother Boudicca (better known as Boadicea) shamefully, provoking an uprising which left the Iceni in control of all southeast England, and giving Boudicca a reputation as a warrior queen which has lasted to this day. However, the Romans brutally suppressed the revolt and built

Venta Icenorum as their centre of government for the area. The whole episode illustrates the truth of Daniel's words concerning the conquests of the fourth beast: "it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it" (7:7). Venta remained the centre of government for the area until 410, when the Romans, under extreme pressure from invading tribes along much of their borders, as foretold in the trumpet visions of Revelation 8, withdrew from Britain, leaving it to the invading Anglo-Saxons.—*Tony Benson*