**A blue and white logo

Description automatically generatedRoman Mancetter**

* **Manduessedum** or **Manduesedum** was a Roman fort and later a civilian small town
* The name is of Romano-Celtic origin. It’s likely derived from the [Gaulish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaulish" \o "Gaulish) *essedum*, meaning 'chariot', whilst the first element *mandu* was common in Gaulish place names, but its meaning is obscure.
* The fort was founded in around AD 50 on the **Watling Street**Roman road, guarding the point where the road crossed the River Anker.
* In 60/ 61 AD Boudicca led the rebellion against the Romans.
* The governor of Britain, Suetonius Paulinus, marched his army down **Watling Street** and prepared his forces for an engagement in the Midlands.
* There is evidence for the build-up of auxiliary forces at [Greensforge](https://www.roman-britain.co.uk/places/greensforge/) in South Staffordshire to the west-south-west, and along **Watling Street** to the west-north-west at **[Letocetum](https://www.roman-britain.co.uk/places/letocetum/)** (Wall, Staffordshire), and further west at **[Pennocrvcium](https://www.roman-britain.co.uk/places/pennocrucium/)** (Water Eaton, Staffordshire).

… He chose a position approached by a narrow defile and secured in the rear by a forest, first satisfying himself that there was no trace of an enemy except in his front, and that the plain there was devoid of cover and allowed no suspicion of an ambuscade. …” (**Tacitus *Annals* XIV.xxxiv**)

* The place described by Tacitus has been convincingly identified with Mancetter in Graham Websters superb book *Boudica*.
* The ‘narrow defile’ may have been one of several tributary valleys of the Anker, particularly the one near White Hall Farm north of Hartshill. The forest protecting Paulinus’ rear has now been reduced to a few patchy woods on the high ground to the south-west of the river, including Monks Park Wood, Bentley Park Wood and Hartshill Hayes Country Park. The plain on which the British host were to assemble may have been the farmland between Atterton, Witherley and Fenny Drayton, covering an area of around five square kilometers.

“… The legionaries were posted in serried ranks, the light-armed troops on either side, and the cavalry massed on the extreme wings. The British forces, on the other hand, disposed in bands of foot and horse were moving jubilantly in every direction. They were in unprecedented numbers,¹ and confidence ran so high that they brought even their wives to witness the victory and installed them in waggons, which they had stationed just over the extreme fringe of the plain.” (**Tacitus *Annals* XIV.xxxiv**)

* According to Tacitus, who gives the more conservative estimates of manpower and losses, over 80,000 Britons were killed whereas only 400 Roman soldiers died.
* As of yet, no evidence has been found which links Mancetter to the battle site.
* Excavations by the Atherstone Archaeological and Historical Society have shown that there were at least three reductions in size of the fort, all within the 1st century.
* At its largest the fort could have housed half a legion (c 3000 men).
* Military occupation is not thought to have continued beyond the last quarter of the 1st century AD.
* Manduessedum later developed into an important civilian settlement, and was the centre of an extensive pottery making industry.
* Products manufactured in the potteries reaches as far away as North Wales and the Antonine Wall.Twenty one pottery kilns have been found in a cluster south-west of the **Watling Street** settlement, others have been found nearby at [Hartshill](https://www.roman-britain.co.uk/places/hartshill/), and there are tile kilns urther southwards.
* Excavations in 1964 revealed evidence of a glass-working workshop established amidst the Mancetter potteries. A glass-making furnace, and five other kilns or furnaces were found in the same area in 1969.
* The pottery wasters recovered from these kilns suggest a working lifetime throughout the second and third centuries,
* The settlement was fortified in the late 3rd or early 4th century.
* The latest coinage found on the site is of Maximus (*c.*455AD).

A map of the united kingdom

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Distribution of Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria in Britain