The Romans probably improved an existing track to create our Roman Road. It linked Cambridge with a 10 mile/16km historic route from Cambridge to Worsted Lodge (roughly on the line of its length the Roman Road is a green lane on chalk, which is now muddier than the chalk. By bus: There is limited car parking at the northern end of the Roman Road, where it meets Wort's Causeway; at Wandlebury (Pay & Display), and on the side road from Babraham where it crosses the A11 at Worsted Lodge.

\[ \text{The Common Lizard also enjoys hot, dry sites. Watch for them basking on patches of bare soil in full sunlight.} \]

\[ \text{How to reach the Roman Road} \]

\[ \text{on foot: The Roman Road is part of a good network of public paths. See OS Explorer maps 209 (Cambridge) and 210 (Newmarket & Haverhill).} \]

\[ \text{by bus: The regular service from Cambridge to Haverhill stops at Wandlebury, Babraham, Hildersham, Linton and Horseheath. A separate service from Cambridge calls at Fullbourn and Balsham. Call 01223 717740 for details.} \]

\[ \text{by road: There is limited car parking at the northern end of the Roman Road, where it meets Wort's Causeway; at Wandlebury (Pay & Display), and on the side road from Babraham where it crosses the A11 at Worsted Lodge. Visitors with disabilities or restricted mobility may find the Wort's Causeway car park most convenient. For much of its length the Roman Road is a green lane on chalk, which may be muddy in wet weather. Mobility vehicles capable of crossing grass should be able to use the byway and bridleway; there may be stiles on any footpaths. The section east of Balsham Road is on clay; in wet weather this will be muddier than the chalk. The Roman Road is maintained and improved by:}\]

\[ \text{Cambridgeshire County Council: The Countryside Services Team is responsible for the Roman Road. To report problems, or for information on accessibility call 01223 717745 or visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside.} \]

\[ \text{The Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke of the Wildlife Trust organises work parties, records the wildlife of these sites and raises funds to maintain them.} \]

\[ \text{The Cambridge Green Belt Project of the Wildlife Trust organises a regular programme of conservation work to restore and conserve important wildlife sites. To find out more about the Friends and the Green Belt Project please contact:} \]

\[ \text{The Cambridge Green Belt Project} \]

\[ \text{The Manor House, Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB3 6DH. Tel. 01954 713530 email greenbelt@wildlifebcnp.org www.greenbeltproject.org.uk} \]

\[ \text{This project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Nationwide Building Society and the Countryside Agency} \]

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\[ \text{The Roman Road} \]

\[ \text{Site of Special Scientific Interest} \]

\[ \text{A guide to this} \]

\[ \text{10 mile/16km historic route} \]

\[ \text{The Roman Road} \]

\[ \text{is part of a good network of public paths. See OS Explorer maps 209 (Cambridge) and 210 (Newmarket & Haverhill).} \]

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Britain had roads and tracks when the Romans arrived. The most important prehistoric route in East Anglia was the Icknield Way, a network of tracks running along the edge of the chalk from Norfolk to Wiltshire. Many settlements in this area lie on routes of the Icknield Way, connected by tracks running across the routes.

The Romans probably improved an existing track to create our Roman Road. It linked Cambridge with a road from Great Chesterford (roughly on the line of the modern A11), then continued southeast towards Haverhill.

To build this relatively minor road they rammed chalk rubble onto the surface of the existing track to form a mound or 
agger
up to 1m high. Water ran off the 
agger
into roadside ditches about 14m apart. On the section from Cambridge to Worsted Lodge the chalk rubble was surfaced with gravel to provide a good all-weather surface but there is no evidence of this further southeast, where it may have carried only local traffic.

### Bringing back the wildflowers …

The trees and shrubs that invade the grassland have deep roots that damage the structure of the road, while the grassland plants die in the shade they cast, so conservation work along the Roman Road benefits both wildlife and the archaeologists. We begin by maintaining and improving the best areas of flower-rich grassland. Scrub and trees are cut back (the work is timed to avoid the main flowering and nesting seasons) but we always leave some areas of scrub and the unbroken hedgerows to provide food and shelter for insects, birds and other animals. The grassland is then mown regularly and the grass-cuttings are removed to reduce nutrient levels and encourage wildflowers. If you walk here regularly you will be able to watch as seeds buried in the soil grow into new chalk grassland on the areas we have cleared.

The Cambridge Green Belt Project, Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, English Heritage, English Nature and those who own or manage the land are working together to conserve the Roman Road.

### Roman Road wildlife

The chalk grassland is at its best between May and August but the species in flower will change through the season. In early summer watch for bright yellow Common Rock Rose and Horseshoe Vetch, delicate white Dropwort and the tight green flowerheads of Salad Burnet. Summer flowers include lilac-blue Small Scabious and the larger, lilac Field Scabious, the scented, tumbled masses of tiny yellow Lady’s Bedstraw and sky-blue Harebells. Knapweeds have thistle-like bright purple flowers on tall stems; Greater Knapweed may be accompanied by the strange brown flowerspike of its remarkable parasite, Knapweed Broomrape. The pinks and masses of Wild Basil and Restharrow add to the array of colours.

This variety of flowers brings a profusion of insects. Bees and bumblebees, solitary wasps, butterflies, moths, hoverflies, beetles and others compete for nectar and pollen from the flowers. There are also many less noticeable species (including spiders, grasshoppers and ants) living here. Some of these are only found on chalk grassland.

This abundance of plants and insects in turn attracts larger predators. Listen for birds singing in the hedgerows: Whitethroat, Yellowhammer ("A-little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheeeeeeese"), Chaffinch and Corn Bunting, which has a song like a bunch of keys being shaken. Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Swallow, Sparrowhawk and many more may be seen above or beside the Roman Road. Rabbits and their burrows are easy to spot but shrews, voles, moles and other mammals are less obvious; watch for their burrows and tracks.
The Roman Road runs along the chalk ridge to avoid heavy soils and mud on lower ground. Known as Woles or Woles Street in the 13th century, later records refer to the Roman Road as Woolstrem Way. This suggests that traders in wool, sheep or worsted yarn (probably from Norfolk) used the road, from which it is also known as Worsted Street. Its third name, the Via Devana, was invented by 18th century historians who assumed the road ran from Colchester to Roman Deva, now Chester.

1 People lived and worked in this landscape long before the Romans arrived. The remains of what may be a prehistoric religious site were found here at the Park & Ride site. Some barrows and other prehistoric features still survive along the Roman Road – a reminder that people have walked this route for thousands of years.

2 The Beechwood and Wandlebury are Nature Reserves near the Roman Road; a third in Fulbourn includes the site of a medieval moated house. For more information visit http://www.wildlifebcnp.org.

3 The agger structure of the Roman Road is best seen here and in the sections to either side of the A11.

4 The Gog Magog Hills may have been named for the mythical giant(s) that lived in Albion, or for two tribes of barbarians who, according to the Bible, will appear as a sign of the Last Days. Two possible Bronze Age barrows ‘The Twopenny Loaves’ once stood near the road here but have been completely levelled.

5 Wandlebury Country Park and Nature Reserve contains an Iron Age hill fort that may have controlled the Icknield Way, the valley of the Cam and the settlement that became Cambridge. The circular banks and ditches were largely levelled in the 18th century when the Earl Godolphin built his mansion here. In 1954 the estate was purchased by the Cambridge Preservation Society. The ruinous house was pulled down but the stables, famed as the home of lavish parties. The new owners demolished the house in the 18th century, later records refer to the Roman Road as Woolstrem Way. This suggests that traders in wool, sheep or worsted yarn (probably from Norfolk) used the road, from which it is also known as Worsted Street. Its third name, the Via Devana, was invented by 18th century historians who assumed the road ran from Colchester to Roman Deva, now Chester.

6 Mile Road, an unassuming farm track, is actually a Romanised prehistoric track. A complex of Roman buildings once stood in the field to the northwest, while the field to the southeast is a Scheduled Ancient Monument preserving the site of Bronze Age livestock enclosures and a barrow. Copley Hill, at the junction of Mile Road and the Roman Road, was thought to be a barrow but is in fact a natural chalk knoll topped by what may be a barrow.

7 Signal Hill was one of a line of semaphore stations transmitting news across the country during the Napoleonic War (1802–1815). During WWII a decoy runway was laid out in the field between Signal Hill and the Roman Road to lure German bombers away from Duxford, and Meg’s Mound (near the point where the Roman Road crosses the A11) was a searchlight site.

8 The Roman Road joined another road running north from Great Chesterford on the line of the modern A11. Archaeological work here found the Roman Road is less well-built as it continues southeast toward Haverhill.

9 Chilford Hall is notable as the only vineyard along the Roman Road. Refreshments are available Friday–Sunday.

10 Borley, Rivey Hill, Balsham and Hari Wood are ‘ancient woods’ shown on 15th century maps. These may have been woodlands when the Romans arrived but the native trees of Borley Wood have been replaced by planted pines. A possible Roman barrow survives at the edge of the wood.

11 Mark’s Grave is a mystery: we don’t know who Mark was. Perhaps an old parish boundary marker was mistaken for a gravestone!

12 Recorded as Streffur in 1086, Streetly means ‘clearing by a Roman Road or Street’. Many Roman finds have been reported from this area.

13 At 112m above sea level this is the highest point on the Roman Road. The great Cedar of Lebanon is all that remains of the second Horseshoe Hall. In the 17th century its owners bankrupted themselves on the house, gardens and lavish parties. The new owners demolished the house in the 1790s and the last remains of the gardens were destroyed in 1991.

Common Rockrose, a plant of calcareous soils. The name ‘Rockrose’ dates from the 18th century, when its relatives became garden plants. In the 17th century John Ray called it ‘Sunflower’. Common Blue Butterflies.

Please help others to enjoy the Roman Road
Do not pick wildflowers: insects and birds rely on them. Please clean up after your dog: the faeces are unsightly and upset the balance of nutrients in the grassland.

Please note that the Roman Road is a Byway but a Traffic Regulation Order restricts the use of wheeled vehicles. Horses are not permitted on the Roman Road east of Horseheath.