

Roman Cambridgeshire| Things to do| localecrets

- With Roman collections in many museums across the county, modern day villages and towns that were once Roman settlements, archaeologically interesting walks and more, Cambridgeshire has much to offer those with a thirst for all things Roman. Cambridge City itself is an interesting place to start your research. The Castle Hill area of the city was one a very important site for the Romans. A pre-roman settlement already existed north of the river before Castle Hill became of great importance with its river crossing and old iron-age fort.



A town emerged where Castle Hill is now and became known as Duroliponte, meaning 'fort at the bridge'. There are no ruins to see but Castle Mound at the top of Castle Hill, adjacent to the present-day Shire Hall, remains an intriguing link to roman Cambridge and is worth climbing to the top for great views across the area. Whilst making your way back in to the city centre stop at St Peter's Church on Castle Hill, where observant eyes will spot roman tiles in its walls. Once back in the city centre two Cambridge museums are worth heading to, both free to enter. [The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology](#), at the Downing Street entrance of Downing College, has a fine collection of archaeological finds from around Cambridgeshire. Artefacts on display include pieces from important roman cemeteries in the villages of Great Chesterford, thought to be one of the earliest roman settlements, where evidence of a fort and a Romano-Celtic temple have been found and Litlington, where a roman villa was also excavated in 1881 and 1913. The [Fitzwilliam Museum](#) on Trumpington Street houses an extensive collection of ancient world artefacts, including ancient roman pieces spanning from 3000 BC to 4th century AD. The museum is home to the beautiful Mosaic Niche dating back to AD50-70. Given to the museum in 1910, it remains in great condition and is an important part of its collection. Other intriguing artefacts include engraved stones, marble figures, inscriptions and clay pottery. **Ely, March, St Ives, Godmanchester & Wisbech** For more museums, head to Ely, March, St Ives, Godmanchester and Wisbech, where a wealth of information can be found. Exhibits at the [Ely museum](#) include some of the earliest roman pottery and tiles found in the area, a roman helmet and information about the importance of the Fens to the Romans. [March museum](#) also exhibits information on roman era Fen life and nearby Stonea, where a large roman building was excavated by the British Museum in the 1980s. This find lead to the theory Stonea was the

site of Boudicca's last stand. Boudicca was leader of the East Anglian Iceni tribe who led a rebellion against the Romans. Roman influence around the Fens can also be found in an eighty-mile stretch of water later called Car Dyke, which runs from the western edge of the river Cam all the way through to Lincoln's River Witham. Historians believe this man-made water way was constructed during the first century AD, much of the route now has scheduled monument status. During the 1990s excavations around the Waterbeach area of Car Dyke found artefacts related to a boat and cargo of roman pottery. If you are interested in discovering more about Roman life and influence around the Fens can find further information about Fenland archaeology [here](#).



[St Ives' Norris Museum](#) houses finds from local cemeteries and a reconstruction of a major nearby Roman settlement, Durovigutum, which became Godmanchester. A wealth of information on Godmanchester's Roman past is available in its [museum](#) from glass window panes to bones of roman infants. The nearby town of Huntingdon also has a Roman link, situated as it is along the route of the old Ermine Street, with a major roman road running from London to York, through parts of Cambridgeshire - now the A1. Visitors to Wisbech can find a huge collection of historic coins exhibited in its [museum](#) alongside many examples of pottery and a skeleton of a woman. The artefacts in these museums offer visitors a fantastic insight in to the life in Roman times. Cambridgeshire If exploring history outdoors is more your thing the Cambridgeshire countryside offers walkers a roman fix in a beautiful environment. Head to the eight-mile [Earthworks Way walk](#) which begins at Reach Lode near Upware village, Reach once served as roman trading port, whilst the lode formed part of the sprawling Devil's Dyke. An alternative walk taking in a wealth of Roman history is the Roman Way walk which begins in Cambridge and takes in Wandlebury Country Park and ends at the village of Horseheath, more information can be found [here](#). [Cambridge Archaeological Unit](#) and the RSPB recently held a joint open day at Fen Drayton lakes nature reserve, where archaeologists have been excavating a Roman villa first discovered in the area 20 years ago. Roman artefacts are being discovered regularly across the county. If you would like to become actively involved in archaeological digs, [Access Cambridge Archaeology](#) is an outreach unit attached Cambridge University's Archaeology division. Their aim is to actively involve communities and individuals in fun, educational and challenging archaeological activities. [Cambridge Archaeology Field Group](#) also offers lectures, workshops and fieldwork opportunities throughout the county.

ARTICLES

