

The major Roman roads in the district are well-known. Watling Street, to the west, ran from the Channel coast through London (Londinium), St Albans (Verulamium) and Redbourn before leading north-west to Wroxeter and Chester, much of it on the route of what is now the A5. Ermine Street, to the east, ran from London to Lincoln (Lindum) via Royston; the modern A10 follows much of this route. However, there was also of course a network of minor local roads, often of Celtic origin, some of which passed through the Wheathampstead area. One of these ran from Verulamium to Ickleford, where it joined the Icknield Way. Part of this route is now the north/south farm track south of Herons Farm, which was excavated in 1959 to reveal a foundation of red clay with a metalling of gravel and flint. Another such minor road ran from Verulamium to Welwyn and Braughing, passing through Coleman Green on the line of what is now Coleman Green Lane, eventually joining Ermine Street and Stane Street.

These two roads are accepted as Roman by most authorities. In their book *Roman Roads in the South-East Midlands* (Gollancz 1964) a group of researchers who called themselves "The Viatores" claimed to have identified several more Roman roads around Wheathampstead, running both north/south and east/west, but their findings are now regarded with some scepticism.

It is worth remembering that not all Roman roads are straight and not all straight roads are Roman. The Slype at Gustard Wood, for example, was built by Richard Birley Baxendale in the 19th century.