

GO MILTON KEYNES!

Old Routes through a New City

A Roman Road through Milton Keynes

Watling Street



Left: The Fenny Stratford coin forger's hoard. These pots and blank discs are a Roman illegal coin making kit, found near the A5 roundabout at Fenny Stratford by a metal detectorist during the construction of the road

Below: Gold solidus of the Emperor Constantine I, 326-330 AD, found at the Roman villa at Bancroft, close to Watling Street. It was minted 1,700 miles away at Heraclea (modern day Ereğli, Turkey)

The first route through this area was Watling Street, which was built by the Romans between 43 and 75 AD. It was the most important Roman road in Britain and stretched from Dover through London and into Wales.

The Roman army that defeated Boudicca in 61AD would have marched along Watling Street and later a thriving Roman town called *Magiovinium* grew up at Fenny Stratford. After the Romans left, Watling Street fell into disrepair.

The Anglo-Saxon reference to street or *straet* has survived in many place names, as in Fenny Stratford and Stony Stratford, which lie on Watling Street.

Both these towns saw their fortunes grow in the 19th century when Thomas Telford brought Watling Street back into use as a turnpike road for coaches bringing mail to and from Ireland.



Up to 40 coaches a day travelled through the two towns and coaching inns and ale houses sprang up.

Today Watling Street is still a busy road as it forms much of the A5.