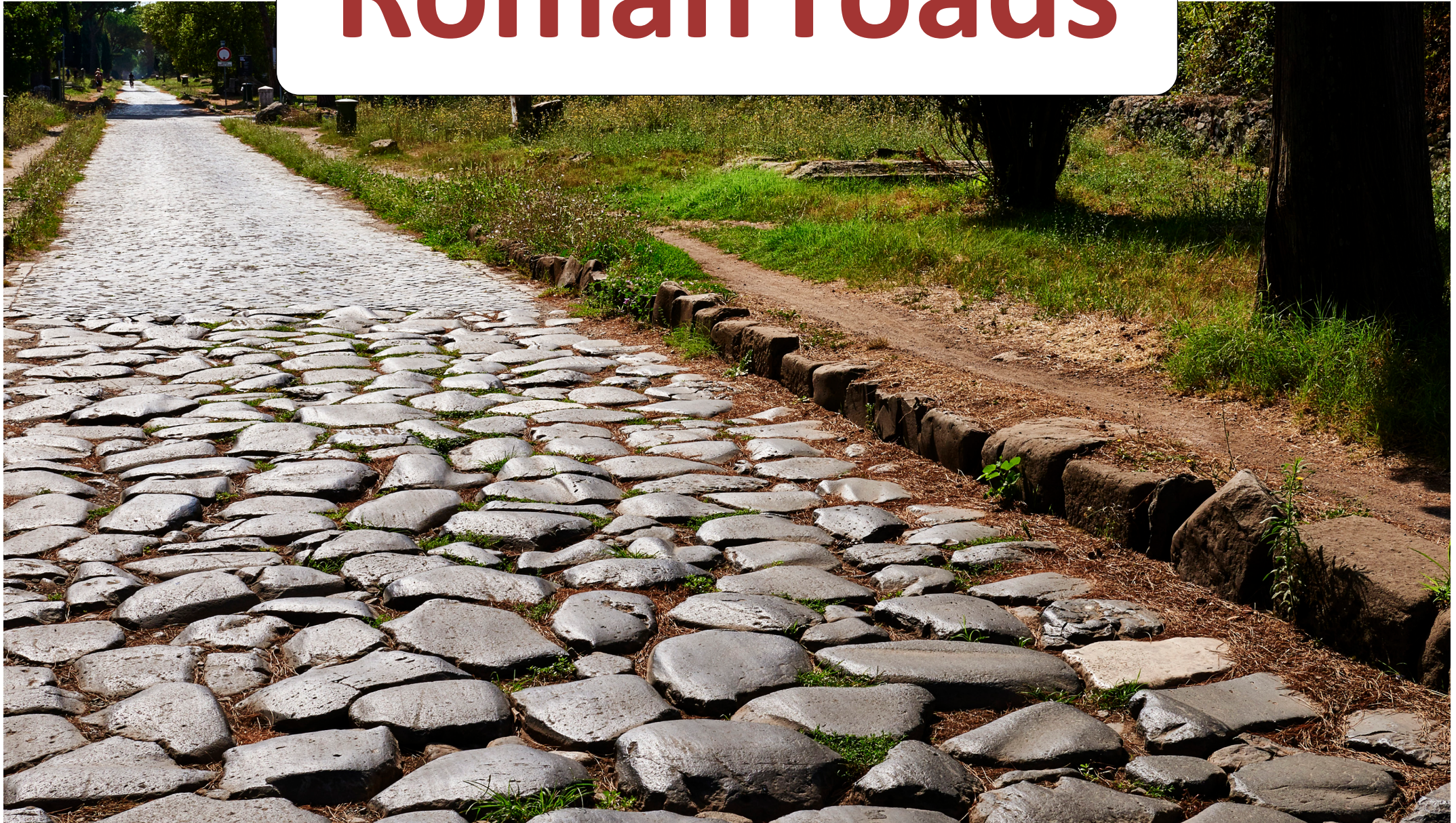
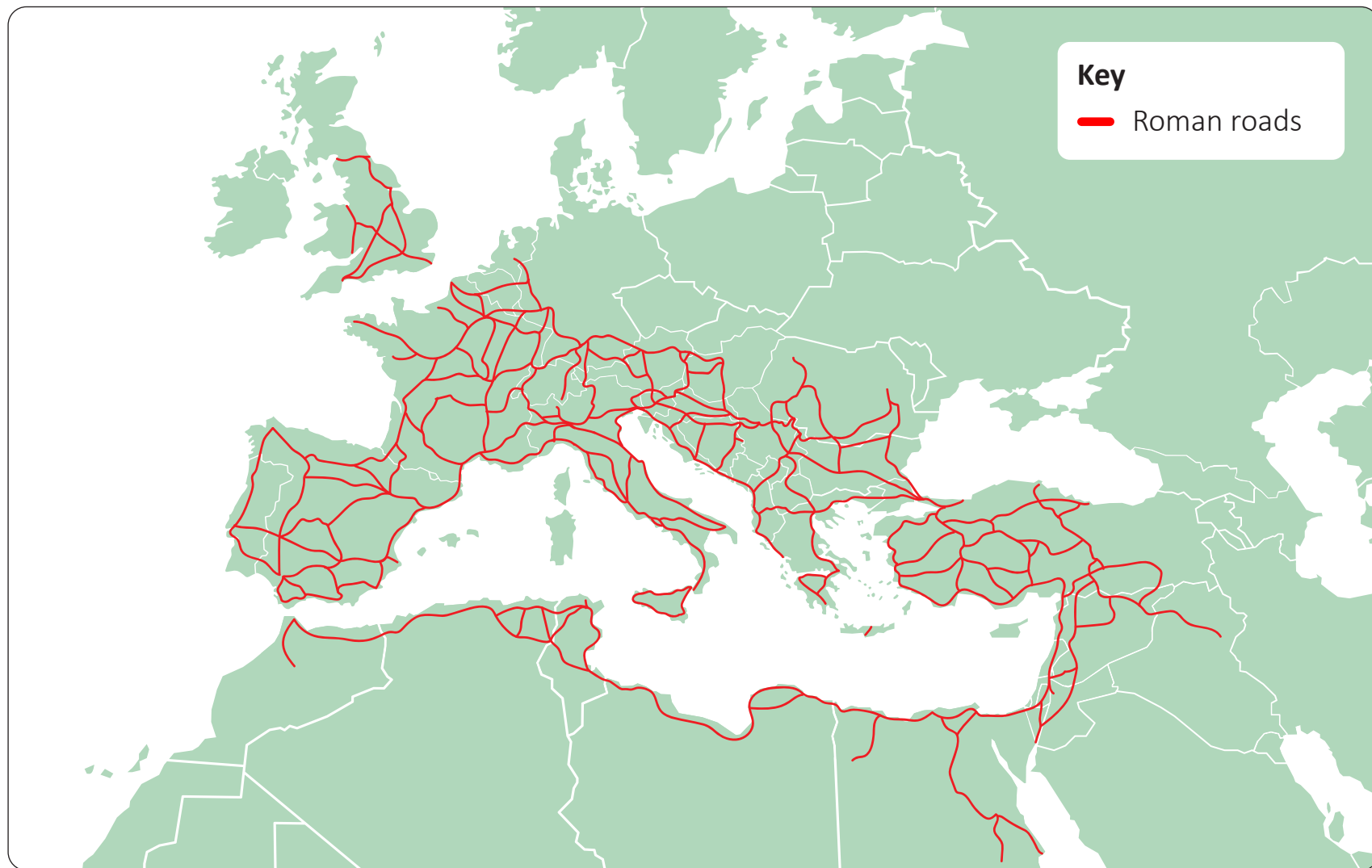


Roman roads





The network of main roads in the Roman Empire cAD 125

The Romans were excellent roadbuilders. They built over 50,000 miles of road across the whole of the Roman Empire.

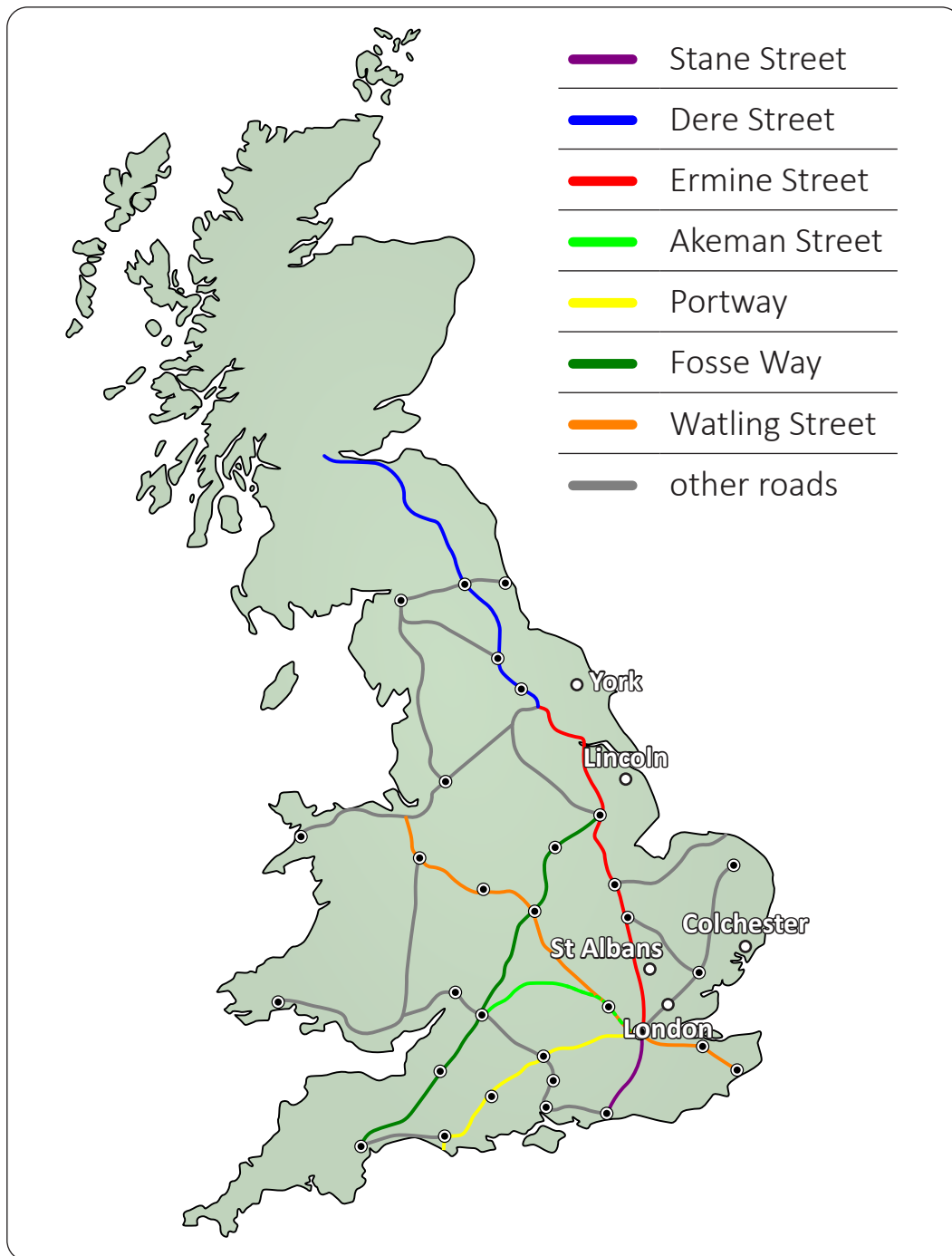




Image from: Wikimedia Commons/Heritage Images

Before the Romans arrived in AD 43, Britain had no proper roads. Tribespeople travelled along dirt trackways and paths, which connected local farms or settlements. They were often in poor condition and were impassable in bad weather.





After the invasion in AD 43, the Romans built a network of roads across Britannia, which linked forts and towns.





Image from: Wikimedia Commons/Public domain

Most Roman roads were long and straight. Straight roads made travel quicker and meant that rebels couldn't hide behind winding bends in the roads and ambush Roman soldiers.



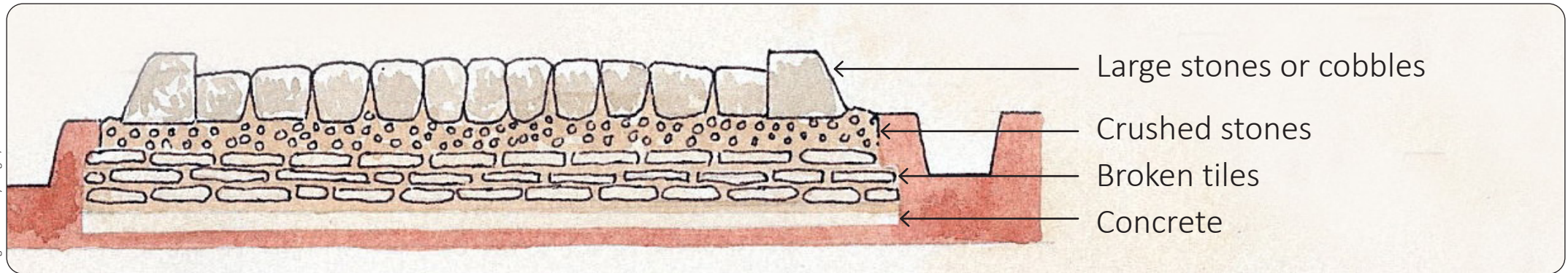


They built bridges or viaducts to cross rivers or valleys. These were complex structures made from strong, stone arches. Many can still be seen today.





The Romans planned their roads carefully. Roman surveyors planned out a straight course from one landmark to another and used a tool called a *groma* to make sure that roads met at right angles. Roads were constructed by soldiers from the Roman army.



Cross-section of a Roman road

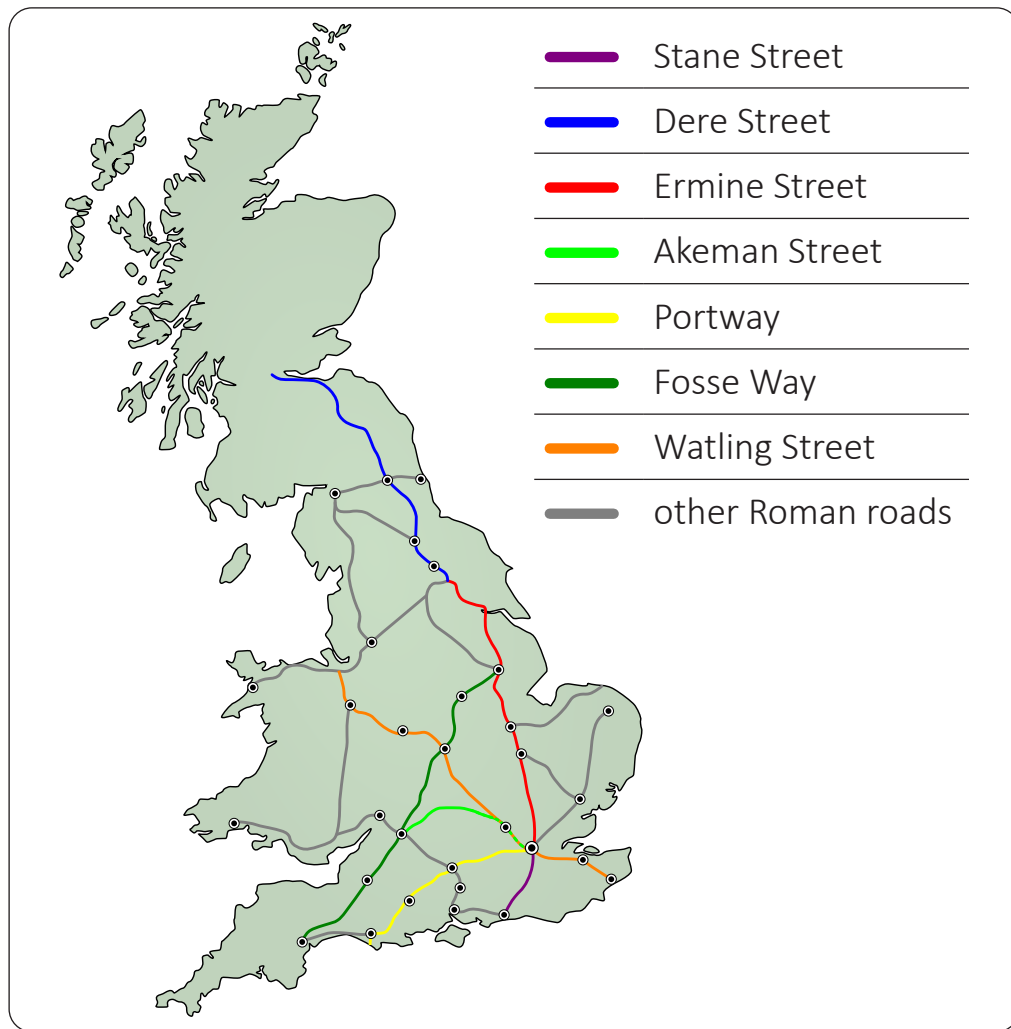
Roman roads were strong and durable because they were made from several layers of hard-wearing materials. The surface of the road was slightly curved so that rainwater could run off the surface and into ditches beside the road.





Roman ingenuity dramatically changed how people lived in Britannia. Roman army legions used roads to move quickly from one place to another. Traders were able to transport their goods for sale and ordinary citizens were able to travel from one town to another more easily.





Roads in Roman Britain



Major roads in United Kingdom today

Most Roman roads in Britannia were used for hundreds of years after they were built. Some are still used today but have been resurfaced and renamed, including motorways and A roads.





Roman bridge, Córdoba, Spain



Roman road, Jerash, Jordan



Roman road, Lazio, Italy



Roman bridge, Santa Maria Maior, Portugal

Some original Roman roads and bridges can be seen in countries that were once a part of the Roman Empire.





The Romans could not have built their vast Empire without a network of strong, well-built roads. They played a vital part in the Romanisation of Britain.

Image from: Getty Images/Andrea Pistolesi

