## *Prehistoric*

The only street-name in Cambridge that has connections with prehistoric times is ARBURY Road. The name is spelled Herburg, Ertburg, and similarly in thirteenth-century documents, and means earthwork. It used to be thought that Arbury Camp, at the north end of the road, was a fort like the one at Wandlebury or the War Ditches on LIME KILN Hill, south of the reservoir (now destroyed), but it is today regarded as an undefended site. A low circular bank and ditch about 100 metres in diameter, it was almost certainly an Iron Age enclosure for keeping animals safe from wolves and robbers. (See Alison Taylor, *Prehistoric Cambridgeshire*, 1977, and Sallie Purkis, *Arbury Is Where We Live*, EARO, The Resource Centre, Back Hill, Ely, 1981.)

## *Roman*

In the late first century BCE Catuvellaunian settlers created a village on the spur of CASTLE hill. This was abandoned at the time of the Roman conquest, and between 43 BCE and 70 CE the Romans built a military camp there. The Catuvellaunians may have taken part in the rebellion of Boadicea after 60 CE, or have suffered for it. The Romans were not there to tolerate insubordination. (See David J. Breeze, *Roman Forts in Britain*, 1994.)

The Roman 'castrum' was bounded on two sides by the line of MOUNT PLEASANT, where there was a wall and a ditch. This turned at a right angle and probably continued across HUNTINGDON Road to CLARE Street and back down the line of MAGRATH Avenue to near CHESTERTON Lane, turning to the south-west through KETTLE'S YARD and then north-west up HONEY HILL. The last of these is a name often found, making a rustic joke about a particularly muddy place, not much like honey. However, local residents prefer the name Pooh Corner, alluding to the great bear's favourite relish. Kettle was a former owner. (See David M. Browne, *Roman Cambridgeshire*, 1977; also Mac Dowdy, *Romans in the Cambridge Area*, Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Excavation at Shire Hall, 1983.)

A gate to the Roman camp was slightly to the north-west of ALBION Row. Here the legions marched in to their barracks.

CHESTERTON Lane derives its name from 'ceastre', originally the Roman camp or 'castrum'. (Chesterton was for many centuries separate administratively from Cambridge, as is implied by the Victoria Bridge, which has the Cambridge arms on the south side, and the equivalent for Chesterton on the north. It included the medieval castle.) A Roman road from Ermine Street near Wimpole passed through Barton and continued north-east of the camp. It is called AKEMAN Street, but the street that now has this name is at right angles to the original one, which followed almost exactly the line of STRETTEN (sometimes spelled STRETTON) Avenue, evidently named after a Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire (Charles James Derrickson Stretten, born in 1830, who was connected with St LUKE'S Church, near his HQ, as were several others such as those named in HALE and SEARLE Street, and HARVEY

GOODWIN Avenue. Less likely is the first Master of Trinity Hall, Robert Stretton, who resigned in 1355.) At CARLTON Way the line of the Roman road is followed exactly; the name is that of Henry Boyle, first Lord Carlton, who died in 1725, was MP for Cambridge University 1692–1705 and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1701. His coat-of-arms appeared on the inn-sign of the Carlton Arms until 1996.

Akeman Street continues in MERE Way, near the city boundary – 'mere' being a name often used for a boundary or division – and then in a straight line, becoming a track up which the legions marched towards Ely; beyond there the road led to Denver and the coast at Brancaster. 'Akeman' was derived by antiquarians, without justification, from 'Acemanes-ceastre', an ancient name for Bath.

The course of the Roman road from the south is now marked by the part of HILLS Road beginning at STATION Road, continuing in REGENT Street, ST ANDREW'S Street, SIDNEY Street, BRIDGE Street, MAGDALENE Street, CASTLE Street and HUNTINGDON Road. (From STATION Road southwards the old road diverges slightly until WORTS' Causeway.) It is often called the Via Devana, but this is again a name mistakenly given by antiquarians who believed it was part of a road that led from Colchester to Chester.

A recent cluster of street-names straddling the course of the Roman road beyond MERE Way is devoted to Roman mythology and history. AUGUSTUS Close is named after the Roman Emperor (63 BCE–14 CE), APOLLO Way after the Roman god of the sun, NEPTUNE Close after the god of the sea, MINERVA Way after the goddess of wisdom and of arts and trades, who was also the goddess of war. HERCULES Close is named after the fantastically strong hero who was proclaimed a

god after his death. A bronze statuette of him has been found at Sutton-in-the-Isle. (See Miranda J. Green, *The Gods of Roman Britain*, 1994.) All these names would have been familiar to the occupants of the Roman villa, remains of which have been found in an area around FORTESCUE Road and HUMPHREYS Road. It was L-shaped and had three or four rooms, with a pottery kiln and cemetery. The 'courts' (not streets) in this area include Roman, Villa, Portico, Pavilion, Forum, Temple, Emperor, Tribune, Consul, Legion and Legate, all with Roman connections.

## *Anglo-Saxon*

When the Romans left Cambridge, their buildings were not preserved by the Angles, Jutes and Saxons, some of whom began to arrive in the late fourth century. For hundreds of years there were raids and pillagings, especially by the Danes.

In the seventh century, according to ST BEDE (673–735), the historian of the English church and people, there was 'a little ruined city called Grantchester [i.e. Cambridge]', where monks discovered a stone coffin to enshrine the bones of St Etheldreda, who had founded Ely Cathedral. (There is a window showing St Bede in Holy Sepulchre Church.) But despite the raids and battles, by the time of Domesday Book nearly all the present day villages were in existence, and Cambridge had a church dating from *c.* 1020, possibly founded by King Canute. (See Alison Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Cambridge*, 1978.)

The names CAMBRIDGE and CAM appear in several street-names. 'Camboritum' was never the name of the city but 'Durolipons' is now suggested by historians as well as 'Dur-

cinate' (or 'Curcinate') and the rather ugly 'Durovigutum'. In Bede's day it was Grantacaestir, and similar names occur until 1170. In 875 'three Danes' wintered in Grantebrygge, selecting it apparently as a place of some importance. Three great ships with oars, coming along the course of the rowing races, are still visible to the mind's eye. In about 945 the name Grontabricc occurs, and similar names continue until 1187. In 1086 Cantebrigie appears, continuing in similar forms till 1454. Caumbrig(g)e appears in 1348, and variants of this lead on to the modern form. Thus 'the Roman fort (–caestir) on the Granta' is later 'the bridge over the Granta (i.e. 'muddy river')'. The 'r' was lost, and the 'G' became 'C', says Reaney, 'because of the inevitable difficulties of the Frenchman [i.e. Norman] in pronouncing a succession of liquids'. (See Reaney, *The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*.) Otherwise Cambridge would be Grambridge, but none the worse for that.

There is a SAXON Street, and a SAXON Road, the latter being near to the supposed hut of the Saxon hermit Godesone (God's son), remembered in the mis-spelt GODESDONE Road. Near a holy well going back to pagan times he had a wooden oratory dedicated to St Andrew, to whom the church on Newmarket Road is consecrated. (Another hermit sat by the bridge where SILVER Street bridge now is, collecting tolls, as hermits often did, many being no more men of religion than eighteenth-century toll-keepers were, but the name is unexplained. There are many Silver Streets, and as Reaney says they cannot all have been occupied by silversmiths – but surely a place like Cambridge needed them?) SAXON *Street* was once part of an 'architectural' trio including also Gothic and Doric Streets; the latter have both disappeared.

To the south-west, a cluster of Anglo-Saxon names is due to Council policy in recent years, of naming streets after the former owners of land in the neighbourhood. The policy was advocated by the mayor, Howard MALLETT, whose name appears in the name of a manor at Hinton, dating from Norman times. The former Youth Club opposite Young Street is named after both. QUEEN EDITH'S Way remembers Editha, consort of Edward the Confessor (*c.* 1003–66), who married her in 1045. She was the owner of the manor of Hinton, now Cherry Hinton, and daughter of Earl Godwin, remembered in GODWIN Way and GODWIN Close.

This Godwin, Earl of the West Saxons, died in 1053. He was probably the son of the South Saxon Wulfnoth, but according to later stories he was the son of a churl. In 1042 he helped to raise to the throne Edward the Confessor, the last Anglo-Saxon king of the old line, and elder son of Ethelred the Unready. Godwin led the opposition to Edward's foreign favourites, and Edward revenged himself by insulting Queen Edith, confining her to a monastery and banishing Godwin and his sons. They returned to England in 1052 and forced the King to agree to Godwin's demands.

Godwin's son was Harold, whom William the Conqueror defeated at Hastings in 1066.

Also remembered here, in GUNHILD Close, Court and Way, is the daughter of King Canute, who succeeded Ethelred the Unready, after defeating Edmund Ironside.

The proposal to name a street after Wulfnoth, probably Godwin's father, was dropped because of the difficulty of pronouncing it. [WULFSTAN] Way was named instead, possibly after St Wulfstan, a Bishop of Worcester (*c.* 1009–95), reputed author of part of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, who is said to have

put an end to the slave trade at Bristol. He was canonised in 1203. There is a translation by J. H. F. Peile, published 1934, of his *Life*. The alternative is Wulfstan (d. 1023) who was Archbishop of York, and author of many Old English homilies, treatises and law codes. He had some connection with Fenland abbeys. His influence brought Canute to Christianity, and thereby saved Anglo-Saxon civilisation from disaster.

ELFLEDA Road commemorates a great Saxon benefactress whose husband, Ealdorman Bryhtnoth, was killed fighting against the Danes in 991. A window in the parish church of Ely is dedicated to him. (See 'The Battle of Maldon', the greatest of all late Old English poems.) There was an Elfleda Farm in this area in 1920.

BENE'T Street is named after St Benedict (480–?543), the founder of Western monasticism. The church, formerly serving as the chapel of Corpus Christi College, also bears his name, as did the college for some 350 years after its foundation in 1352. The church still has an Anglo-Saxon tower and chancel arch, and gives grounds for thinking that before the Conquest a community lived here, as well as the one around Castle Hill.

DITTON Fields, Lane and Walk, like the village of Fen Ditton, derive their names from Anglo-Saxon 'tūn by the dūc', i.e. the farm by the dyke, Fleam Dyke, originally called simply 'ditch' ('Flem Ditch' in local speech), as in HIGH DITCH Road. 'Fleam' seems to have meant 'Ditch of Refuge', from the Old English word *fleam* meaning 'flight'. This road is at the end of the Dyke, a rampart stretching across to Balsham via Fulbourn, which is one of five parallel ramparts, blocking passage between the river and the uplands; the largest is the Devil's Dyke, from Reach to Newmarket, dating from late

Roman times. Locally the pasque flower that used to grow on Fleam Dyke was known as 'Dane's Blood'. There was a battle with the Danes at the Balsham end.

## *Medieval*

Cambridge grew out of two settlements, divided by the river. CASTLE Street runs through the northern one. (See H. C. Darby, *Medieval Cambridgeshire*.) The castle itself was built by order of William the Conqueror in 1068, and was of the motte and bailey type, the still existing mound being the motte, and the area north-west of this forming the bailey. (See Alison Taylor, *Castles of Cambridgeshire*, Cambridgeshire County Council, no date, and W. M. Palmer, *Cambridge Castle*, 1928.) The area was known as 'the Borough'; its male inhabitants were 'the Borough Boys'. Here ST PETER'S Street runs past the small St Peter's Church, sometimes compared to the one in Samuel Palmer's *The Magic Apple Tree* in the Fitzwilliam Museum. Roman bricks from the Roman camp can still be seen round the doorway. POUND Hill was near the former Pound Green, where straying animals were impounded by the pindar. (There was another pound in the middle of FAIR Street by Midsummer Common and one at the Cattle Market.) HAYMARKET Road was conveniently near the pound. (For MOUNT PLEASANT and HONEY HILL see the Roman section.) LADY MARGARET Road is named after the mother of Henry VII, Lady Margaret Beaufort, who founded St John's College, on whose land the road lies. (ST JOHN'S Place is off CASTLE Street.) ALBION Row and ALBION Yard relate to an ancient name for England. In legend Albion was a giant, son of Neptune, who first

discovered the island and ruled over it for forty-four years, or alternatively, in legend, he was the first Christian martyr, who left his name to the country. [SHELLY] Row was Shallow Row in the 1830s, and is almost always spelled without a second 'e'. One explanation is that many oyster shells, supposedly discarded by Roman soldiers, and found in gardens there, gave rise to the name. (See Enid Porter, 'The Castle End of Cambridge', *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Life*, November 1970, pp. 20–2.)

The 'Borough' scarcely grew in size between Roman times and the late nineteenth century. The centre of Cambridge shifted to south of the bridge. (See Arthur Gray, *The Town of Cambridge*, 1925.)

The existence of a bridge is indicated by the name 'Grontabricc' in about 945, but a wooden bridge is said to have been made between 673 and 875, possibly built by Offa, King of Mercia (d. 796), the southern boundary of whose kingdom lay along the north bank of the river, while Offa's Dyke, its western boundary, runs along the border of Wales and England. That there were Danes south of the bridge is indicated by the dedication of ST CLEMENT'S Church: the saint was popular with the Danes. (Cf. St Clement Danes in London.) BRIDGE Street was called Briggestrate in 1254. In 1276 the Sheriff levied sums for the repair of the bridge, but kept most of the money for himself, as well as money charged for the use of a barge which he provided. The keeper of the Sheriff's prison was accused of removing planks from the bridge by night, to delay repairs and augment the Sheriff's profits. In medieval times there was a ducking-chair for 'scolds' at the middle of the bridge. One made in 1745 was in need of replacement in 1766. (See J. H. Bullock, 'Bridge Street, Cambridge: Notes and Memories', *Cambridge*

*Public Library Record*, 11 (1939), pp. 11–23, 47–60, 110–19, and Enid Porter, 'Bridge Street, Cambridge, in the Last Century', *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Life*, April 1970, pp. 24–6.)

The last wooden bridge was replaced in 1756 by a stone bridge designed by James ESSEX. In 1799 this was declared ruinous; it was replaced by the present cast-iron, Magdalene bridge, completed in 1823. (See Richard J. Pierpoint, *Cam Bridges*, 1976.)

QUAYSIDE was in use in the twelfth century, when Henry I instituted a law prohibiting the unloading of any goods on the seaward side of Cambridge. This increased the importance of the town considerably.

ROUND CHURCH Street runs beside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The oldest part, built in 1130–40, is circular in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, known to Crusaders. It was severely restored in 1841. Opposite the church is the apex of a triangle reaching to ALL SAINTS Passage, the present name referring to the Church of All Saints in the Jewry, destroyed in 1865 and rebuilt in Jesus Lane. The older name was 'Vico Judaeorum', or 'Pilats Lane', marking the base of the triangle containing the Jewry. The Jewry was pillaged, and on 12 August 1266, despite letters patent of April ordering there should be no molestation, many Jews were murdered. Robert Pecche, or BECHE, was one of the murderers, who attacked and plundered non-Jews also. In 1275 all remaining Jews were deported en masse to Huntingdon, to satisfy the demand of Queen Eleanor, widow of Henry III, that no Jew should be allowed in any town she held in dower. A stone house belonging to Benjamin the Jew, a landowner, near the west corner of the present Guildhall was later in use as a town gaol. Jews were expelled from England in 1291.