

Let's imagine: Roman nails

Each week the Museum is going to publish a 'Let's Imagine' activity sheet. This activity sheet will include a picture of an object in the Museum. It will tell you about the object and then it will be up to you to imagine a story, poem and/or picture inspired by this object. The sheet will include at least three questions or statements to help get you started and inspired.

This week's object is a selection of **Roman nails**, some of which can be found in the permanent exhibition. Read the information in blue below to find out more about these nails.



Imagine you have to describe these nails to a friend. What would you say?

Draw a detailed and labelled drawing of a Roman nail.

Write a story or poem about being transported back in time to Roman Britain. You witness someone making and/or using these nails. Describe what you see.

These objects are a selection of Roman nails made from iron. They were found in Thatcham, Newtown, where there is evidence of a Roman settlement of some type.

The nails were made by a blacksmith in their workshop, by smelting iron ore and forming the nail by hand producing a square tapered nail with a large flat or domed head. Larger nails were usually used in the construction of buildings, such as binding timber to the roof of a building. The shorter nails were often used for upholstery and furniture construction.

Nails were seen as a valuable resource so it was not uncommon for a Roman Legion to bury its supply of nails when they needed to leave an area, as a large store of iron nails were too bulky and heavy to carry with them. They also wanted to avoid the native peoples finding the nails and melting them down to reshape into weapons to use against them. This ploy usually worked so well that, in some cases, it is not until modern times that this type of 'hoard' has been discovered.