








CITY WALK
Roads to Roam

Roads to Rome

Step into the heart
of Roman London
and discover the
beginnings of the City



CoLAT
The City of London
Archaeological Trust

-  Walking route
-  Short-cut to walking route
-  Probable line of Roman bridge
-  Old City Wall (mostly not visible)
-  Palatial Government Offices (not visible)
-  London Stone
-  Walbrook Stream (now underground)

As Londinium grew, the Romans built more and more facilities: a large forum (market place) and basilica (city hall) **8**, and an amphitheatre **10** with a capacity of up to 6,000 spectators (a third of the City's total population at the time).

Around AD120 a fort **13** was built next to the amphitheatre, and a century or so later the Romans built a wall around Londinium to protect the settlement.



The City of London is the oldest part of London, dating back to AD50. Roman invaders built a bridge over the Thames – the only crossing into the City for 1,700 years – and created a settlement around it, named Londinium. The new settlement was well placed on the river, and traders soon flocked to Londinium to buy and sell goods, making it an important commercial centre.

We recommend you check venue websites for the current opening times and admission. (Reprinted March 2023).

Today, most of the remains of Londinium are 7 metres (23 feet) below where you stand: 2,000 years of building, fire and bombs have hidden much of the Roman settlement. Many fascinating items have been discovered during foundation works for new buildings and archaeological digs, and are kept at the Museum of London. This trail takes you past some of the remains of Roman London that are still visible, and also provides the spark for you to imagine what the ancient settlement looked like.

There are two ways you can follow this trail: half-way through you can choose to either take a short-cut to rejoin the trail nearer the end (taking approximately 90 minutes in total); or follow the full trail to see more of the City's most striking Roman remains (taking approximately 2.5 hours in total).

Start your journey at the City Information Centre. Turn right at Peter's Hill and walk towards the Millennium Bridge; cross Queen Victoria Street and turn immediately left. You'll find Cleary Garden on your right.

Cleary Garden 1

This unique garden was initially created in 1940's on a World War II bomb-site. In 1980's it was remodelled and named after Fred Cleary who improved the green spaces in the City of London. Beneath the garden are the foundations of a large Roman building complex, part of which is a second-century Roman bathhouse that would, at the time, have been on the banks of the Thames. It was excavated between 1987-9. Cleary Garden is very cleverly designed: although



Cleary Garden

the bathhouse can't be seen, it is echoed in the Roman feel to the trellises and pillars of the garden. The plants and flowers were also carefully selected to reflect how the area may have smelt when it was the hub of London's wine trade in the Middle Ages.

Try to identify some of the scents from the plants, and imagine how ancient wine might have tasted.

Return to Queen Victoria Street and continue walking. Bear right onto Cannon Street. The ground slopes down as you walk – this is because you are heading down into the ancient valley of the now buried small river Walbrook, which flowed into the Thames and divided Londinium. In Roman times the valley would have been much deeper, as Roman ground level was well below the present surface. On your left, walk up Walbrook to visit the site of the Temple of Mithras, built towards the end of the second century.

London Mithraeum uses light sculpture, haze and sound to bring the temple's remains to life.

© James Newton

London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE 2

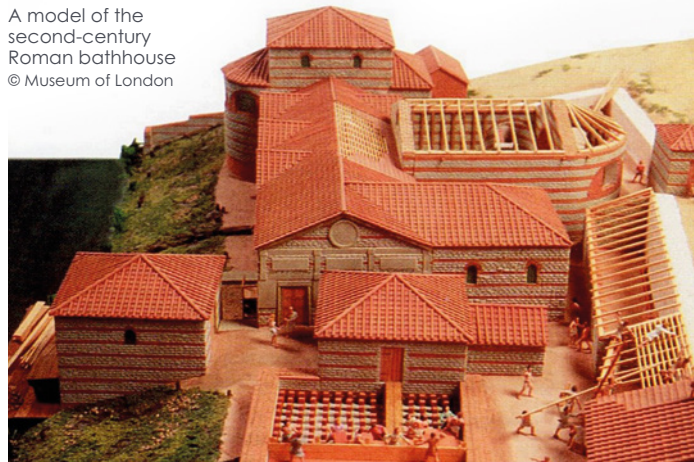
Now under Bloomberg's new headquarters, the Temple was discovered during the construction of the previous building in 1954. The third-century site, which stood on the east bank of the Walbrook river, was a 20th-century revelation, crowds flocked to see it, and queues stretched around the block. Mithraism was a secret mystery cult that was popular during Roman times. You can see the spectacular finds from this site including the earliest written reference to London.

Admission free.

www.londonmithraeum.com



A model of the second-century Roman bathhouse
© Museum of London





London Stone
© Museum of London

Return to Cannon Street and continue along the other side of the Walbrook valley. This part of Cannon Street is based on one of Londinium's main streets and under the station lies the ruins of a significant Roman building 60. The London Stone was found in this area. The Stone – which is housed in a dedicated Portland Stone enclosure at 111 Cannon Street 15 – is possibly a Roman milestone marking the centre of Londinium and the spot from which all distances to Londinium were judged. Continue until you reach the next major junction, where you'll see London Bridge off to your right. Cross the junction here (using the subway or traffic lights) and continue into Eastcheap to the corner of Fish Street Hill.



View of the Monument looking south down Fish Street Hill, published by Thomas Malton (1748-1804)

Fish Street Hill 3

You're now on one of the most important thoroughfares in Londinium. Look down Fish Street Hill to the right, and you'll see what was probably the first street in Roman London. It led to the Roman bridge over the Thames, which is where the church of St Magnus the Martyr stands today. To the left, the street led up to the forum and basilica, the monumental Roman administration centre, on Cornhill and Leadenhall Street. If you want, pop down to

St Magnus the Martyr Church (at the end of the street) and you'll see a piece of Roman timber standing in the outside porch. This piece is from either the old Roman bridge or, more likely, one of the Roman wharves which lie beneath the church and parts of which are still being discovered today. Halfway down the street is The Monument built to commemorate the Great Fire of 1666. In the Roman period Fish Street Hill used to be much steeper; the slope was reduced after the Great Fire.

Roman timber in the outside porch of St Magnus the Martyr



St Magnus the Martyr Church



From here, you can choose whether to follow the rest of the trail or take a shortcut.

SHORTCUT: To take the shortcut, walk up Gracechurch Street on the other side of the junction and stop at the junction with Cornhill. Continue the trail from 8

Otherwise, walk along Eastcheap and Great Tower Street.

OPTIONAL: Take a right at St Dunstan's Hill and another right onto Lower Thames Street. The entrance to Billingsgate Roman House and Baths is on the ground floor of an office building on the right.

Billingsgate Roman House and Baths 4

Some of the best remains of a Roman bath house in London were discovered here in 1848. This second-century house was unearthed during the construction of the Coal Exchange. During excavations, hundreds of Roman coins were discovered dating from the late fourth century, with finds suggesting the house was being used into the fifth century and the end of Roman rule. The bath itself was added to the house in the third century, and features separate cold, warm and hot rooms.

The Bathhouse is open for tours on Saturdays between April and November. Pre-booking is required, visit www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/bathhouse

To continue along the trail, retrace your steps to Great Tower Street.

Follow Great Tower Street to the end. Cross over Byward Street at the traffic lights to reach the ancient church of All Hallows by the Tower.



All Hallows by the Tower

All Hallows by the Tower 5

This church displays remains of two ancient periods: an arch from the previous Anglo-Saxon church, possibly of 11th-century construction (which is the oldest standing part of a church in the City); and in the crypt, part of a plain Roman floor and traces of plastered wall found between 1928-36. This is a remarkable piece of a second-century domestic Roman house that is still at its ancient level. Nearby in the crypt display is a model of the Roman City, and fragments of Anglo-Saxon crosses from the churchyard.

Admission free. ahbtt.org.uk

Continue towards the Tower of London. Cross Byward Street at the traffic lights and head for the Tower Hill underpass. You'll find an impressive piece of the Roman and medieval City Wall on your right, halfway up the stairs, near the underground station.



The Roman City wall at Tower Hill

Tower Hill City wall 6

This is the best surviving section of the old City wall that is still above ground, standing at a height of 10.6 metres (35 feet). The Roman part can be seen up to the level of where guards used to walk (the sentry walk); while most of the upper part was

rebuilt in the Middle Ages, in the lower part you can see the careful Roman construction of squared stone blocks and regular triple rows of red Roman tiles. This is the building method used all along the City wall. Here you can also see the remaining fragments of two walls of a small internal tower.

In front of the wall, you'll also find some other indications of London's Roman past. A modern panel reproduces an inscription found here in 1852. It is from the tomb of Classicianus, a top official in the Roman administration at the time of the rebellion by Boudica (Boadicea), the queen of the Iceni tribe in East Anglia. She burned the young town of Londinium in AD61, but was soon afterwards defeated in battle and killed. Nearby, a modern statue of a Roman emperor was placed here in the 20th century. He is a curious mixture of two emperors, as he has the head of Trajan with the body of Augustus.

Go round the underground station (towards Trinity Square) and turn right into Cooper's Row heading towards Fenchurch Street railway station. On the right, follow your way into the courtyard of the Leonardo Royal Hotel London City (access via street-level car park).

Cooper's Row



Cooper's Row City Wall 7

The City wall survives here to a height of 10.6 metres (35 feet); the lower part is Roman, up to the sentry walk, but much of the masonry has been removed over the centuries by people using the stones for their own purposes.



Plaque recording the discovery of a burial of a Roman teenage girl

There are traces of a stair up to the parapet and openings for archers to shoot arrows from, which were all added in the Middle Ages.

Retrace your steps back to Cooper's Row. Continue along and turn right into Crosswall, then left into Vine Street. On your left you'll get a view of well preserved Roman City wall in the basement of a building. Turn left at India Street and right onto Jewry Street. At the corner with Aldgate, beneath the marker on the wall on your right, was the gate to the eastern boundary of the Roman city.

Cross over and turn left, heading for Leadenhall Street. Take a detour if you'd like to see the Gherkin (30 St Mary Axe) where a plaque records the discovery of a burial of a Roman teenage girl, dating between AD350 and AD400 (opposite Holland House on Bury Street).

Stop at the junction of Leadenhall Street and Gracechurch Street. (Take an optional detour into Leadenhall Market, a stunning Victorian market building).

The site of the Roman Basilica and Forum 8

The basilica (city hall) and forum (market place) of Londinium lie beneath what is now Cornhill and Leadenhall Street. As a large public building, where merchants used to gather, it would have been rather like the lively Leadenhall Market you can see today. Parts of the much larger underlying Roman complex were found on various sites during building works in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Cross Gracechurch Street and continue along Cornhill; the Royal Exchange will be on your right.

Leadenhall Market today





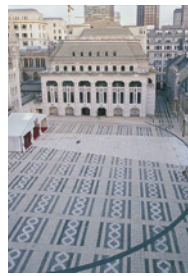
The Royal Exchange, now a complex of shops and restaurants

Royal Exchange 9

Though your surroundings are modern, stop at the front steps for a moment and look around. All the major buildings here are in a Roman style, even though they were erected in the

19th and 20th centuries. On your right is the Royal Exchange of 1841 and further down Bank junction to your left you'll see the official accommodation for the Lord Mayor, the Mansion House, built between 1739-52. Both have frontages based on Roman temples, similar to the Pantheon in Rome. Adjacent to the Royal Exchange is the Bank of England; its south side (which you're facing) was largely built during 1823-37.

Turn right along Princes Street and left into Gresham Street. Once you reach the church of St Lawrence Jewry, turn right into Guildhall Yard.



The Roman amphitheatre outlined in Guildhall Yard

amphitheatre are conserved below the Art Gallery, and the arena is outlined in the Yard's pavement. Watch out for Roman gladiators!

Admission Free.

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/amphitheatre

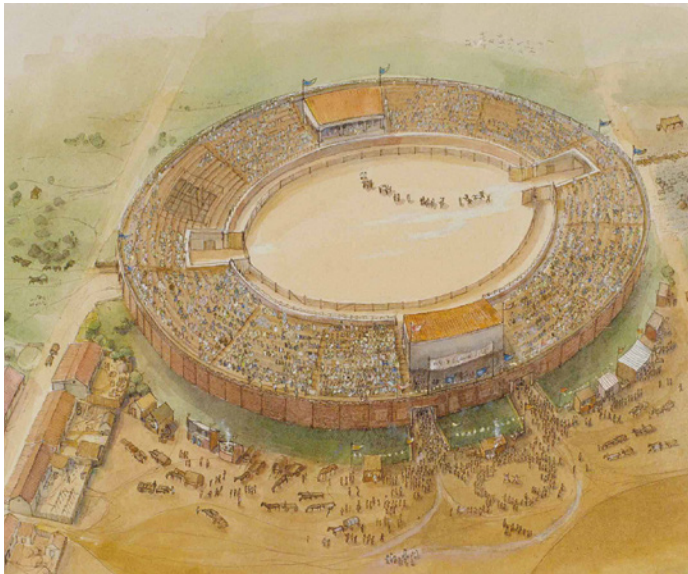


Cross Guildhall Yard and turn right into Aldermanbury; take the first left into Love Lane. Turn right along Wood Street and cross London Wall at the lights. Continue on Wood Street and turn right into St Alphege Garden

St Alphege Garden 11

Wood Street, which you have just walked along, sits the central street through a Roman fort which was built here in around AD120, right at the north-west corner of Londinium. The imposing section of City wall in this garden originally formed the northern wall of the fort and was later incorporated into the Roman City wall which wrapped round two sides of the fort. Here is the best surviving evidence for the medieval repairs to the Roman wall. During the Wars of the Roses in 1477, the then Lord Mayor of London, Ralph Joceline, ordered the wall to be repaired between Aldgate and Aldersgate, and the top of the wall was rebuilt in brick. Some of the diamond patterns in darker bricks can still be seen today.

The Roman City wall and its top layer of bricks from 1477 at St Alphege Garden



An artist's impression of the amphitheatre by Judith Dobie © MOLA

The Roman Amphitheatre 10

In 1988, excavations undertaken ahead of the construction of the Guildhall Art Gallery on the east side of the Yard found, to everybody's surprise, that a Roman amphitheatre formerly stood here. A city of Londinium's importance must have had one, but it had never been discovered. The remains of the east entrance of the

Medieval towers on the City wall

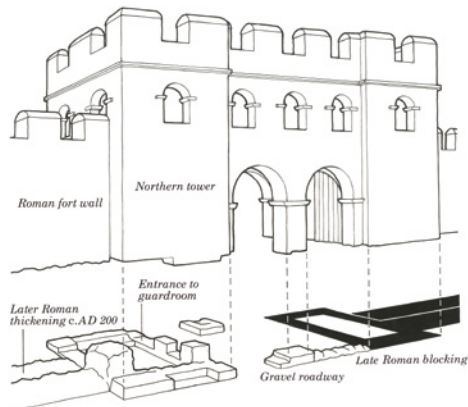


Return to Wood Street, turn left back the way you came, and on your right just before the junction with London Wall take the escalator up to the high walk. Turn right along the high walk until you can see the Roman and medieval City wall with its towers below on your right.

West gate of the Roman fort and City wall north of London Wall 12

The base of the wall here is Roman but the interval towers you see were added in the Middle Ages. The street called London Wall was built in 1959, and is named after the wall whose route it follows. Before the street was built, excavations on this site revealed the west gate of a Roman fort from around AD120. It had twin entrance ways and two flanking square towers. See the northern tower in a chamber below London Wall on a fort gate tour, see Museum of

Reconstruction of the west gate of the Roman fort
© Museum of London



London website. Running north from this tower is the wall of the fort. The gate was eventually blocked with stones, possibly in the troubled years of the fourth century near the end of Roman rule in Britain, and the layers of the blocking can still be seen.

To cross over the busy road and reach the final stop at Noble Street, take the high walk to the left. Go down the stairs or lift to street level and walk around to the right into Noble Street.



Noble Street ruins

Noble Street 13

Here is a line of ruined 19th-century buildings destroyed in the Blitz during World War II. They are based on the Roman City wall which you can see at the base of what stands today. At the south end of the site are the remains of a small rectangular stone building – this was the corner tower at the south-west part of the second-century Roman fort discovered in 1950.



Illustration of the Roman City and fort
© Peter Froste

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The Museum of London at London Wall closed in December 2022, in preparation for its upcoming relocation to West Smithfield. Find out more on the Museum's website: www.museumoflondon.org.uk/west-smithfield

This publication has been produced by the City of London Corporation a uniquely diverse organisation with three main aims: to support and promote the City as the world leader in international finance and business services; to provide local services and policing for the Square Mile; and to provide valued services to London and the nation.



As a custodian of London's heritage, the City provides stewardship for a huge collection of books, archives, pictures, photographs, prints and other materials, which constitute a major part of the recorded memory of London, including Londinium.

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

CoLAT

The City of London
Archaeological Trust

The City of London Archaeological Trust (CoLAT) is a charity whose purpose is to support and initiate archaeological work in the City of London and its environs. It has partnered with the City of London Corporation to produce this publication.



City Visitor Trail

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When nature calls, take advantage of the Community Toilet Scheme. Look for the sticker in the window of participating shops, bars & restaurants.



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