

Sculpture of Mithras slaying a bull  
© Museum of London



in partnership with

**Bloomberg**

LONDON MITHRAEUM **Bloomberg SPACE**

London Mithraeum and Museum of London  
Dual-site visit  
**KS2 Romans**

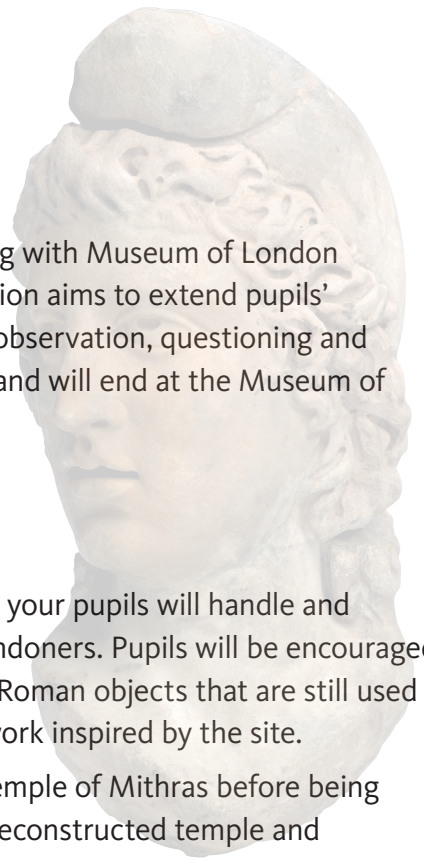
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## Visit description

London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE is delighted to be partnering with Museum of London to offer a free schools programme for Key Stage 2 pupils. The session aims to extend pupils' knowledge about Roman London and encourage development of observation, questioning and prediction skills. The session will begin at the London Mithraeum and will end at the Museum of London. Please find overview of the session below.



### London Mithraeum

In the two-hour workshop, facilitated by an experienced educator, your pupils will handle and investigate real Roman objects to reveal the stories of the first Londoners. Pupils will be encouraged to make connections between the past and present by discussing Roman objects that are still used today. They will also be encouraged to explore contemporary artwork inspired by the site.

The pupils will then explore Roman religion and learn about the Temple of Mithras before being taken down, seven metres below ground level, to experience the reconstructed temple and immersive sounds and light experience.

### Walking trail

Your class will be guided on the 30-minute walk between the two sites. The walk will build pupils' understanding of the geography of Londinium and help them compare different aspects of life in the city now and then. It includes walking past the site of the amphitheatre and fort, and seeing the remains of the Roman city wall.

### Lunch

Your class will be allocated a 30-minute slot in the lunch area.

### Museum of London

Our expert guide will lead pupils on a detailed exploration of the Roman London gallery:

- themes covered during the morning visit to the London Mithraeum and the guided walk will be reinforced by artefacts and exhibits in the gallery
- pupils will develop historical enquiry skills. They will work in small groups to select and research a favourite object related to one of the following themes: the army, trade, entertainment and leisure, crafts and shops, homes or religion and belief
- each group will then present their chosen object and their findings can be used in follow-up work



London Mithraeum and Museum of London  
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# Timetable

## London Mithraeum and Museum of London dual-site visit

### Timings

10am	Arrival at London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE
10.20-11.20am	Introduction to archaeology of the site. Object handling workshop focusing on people's lives (jobs and crafts) in early Londinium
11.20am-12pm	Visit to the interactive sound and light reconstruction of the London Mithraeum, and discussion about religion and beliefs drawing on evidence from late Londinium
12-12.30pm	Walk with facilitator to the Museum of London (see map on page 12)
12.30-1pm	Lunch at the Museum of London
1-2pm	<b>Roman London</b> gallery visit. Facilitated exploration and group work followed by pupils presenting their findings to each other
2.30pm	Session ends

### Curriculum links

The day explores the growth of Londinium, the lives of its people and the mysterious Temple of Mithras. It has been specially designed to provide an exciting and memorable cross-curricular visit for key stage 2 pupils.

**History:** supporting study of the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain. Pupils will develop historical enquiry skills and learn how archaeology helps us to interpret the past.

**Geography:** developing geographical understanding of the topography of Londinium (including the importance of the river and the defensive city walls) and comparing the Roman city to the modern city today.

**Religious Education:** places of worship and polytheism (belief in many gods).

**Art:** developing pupils' recording and observational skills.

**English:** focus on retrieving and recording information from non-fiction sources; learning and using specific terminology appropriately; identifying themes and inferences.

**Science:** materials and their properties, and changes to materials over time.



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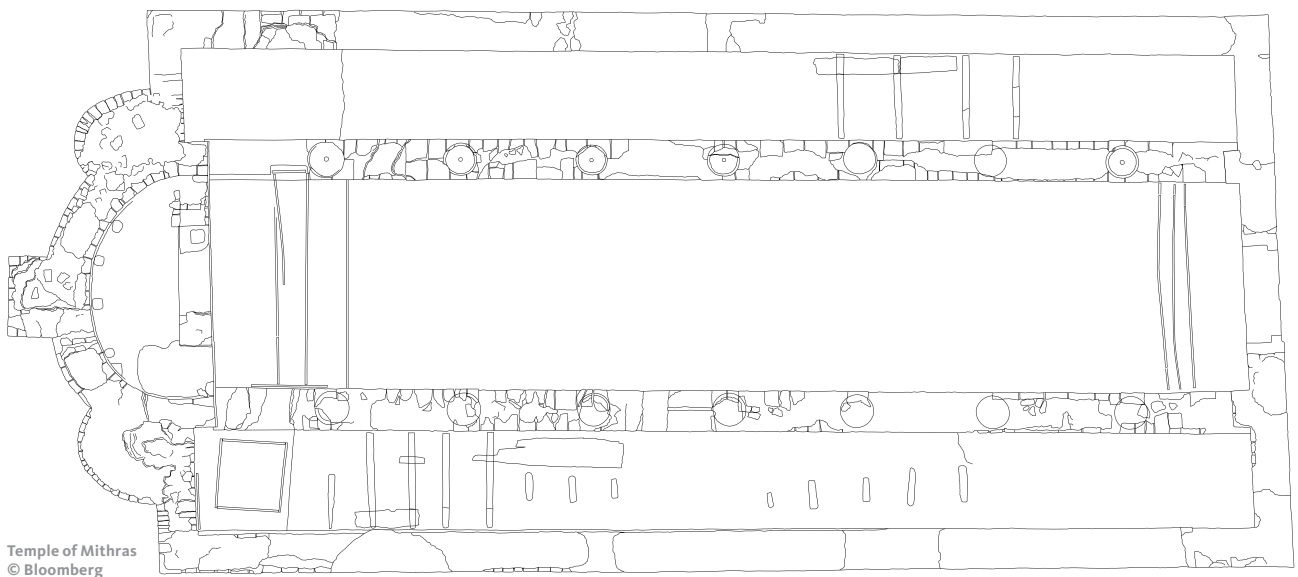
# The Temple of Mithras

## What is a Mithraeum?

A Mithraeum is another name for the Temple of Mithras, a Roman sacred space where the worshippers of the god Mithras would meet. The temple in the City of London is one of only a handful of such buildings from Roman Britain that have been discovered.

The temple was built on the banks of the Walbrook stream, and built of stone brought from Kent and clay bricks.

The temple was a sunken rectangular structure (approximately 17 x 7.5m) with one rounded 'apse' end. It was shaped like an aisled church today, with two aisles and an altar.



It was originally built in approximately AD 240-250, but was modified several times. It was taken over by the cult of the god Bacchus in the 4th century and abandoned in the 5th century as Londinium itself collapsed.



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## When was the Temple of Mithras discovered?

The Temple of Mithras was discovered in 1954 during excavations by Professor W F Grimes. Professor Grimes and his team undertook 'rescue' excavations on areas of the City of London which were destroyed by the Blitz. No one was aware of a temple on the site before the excavation – it was found by accident.

The original excavation of the Temple of Mithras lasted a few weeks, but it was only on the penultimate day that the famous head of Mithras was discovered, revealing who the temple was dedicated to. The temple was not preserved in its original location and in 1962 it was reconstructed to the north-west of its original site.

## How did Bloomberg become the stewards of the Temple of Mithras?

Bloomberg is a global information and technology company, delivering business and financial information, news and insights to customers around the world. In 2010 Bloomberg bought the land on which the reconstruction stood, and on which the original discovery had been made, to build their new European headquarters. Its construction also led to the huge archaeological project that discovered thousands of early London artefacts including writing tablets.

Bloomberg worked with the City of London and a team of conservation specialists from MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) to dismantle the temple and reconstruct it back close to its original position and level, recreating the form of the original ruin, within a publicly accessible space.



Queue of visitors at 1954 excavation  
© Museum of London



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# Roman religion and belief in Londinium

## Did Roman Londoners believe in Roman gods?

The people of Roman London held an enormous number of different religious beliefs, including iconic Roman gods such as Jupiter and Mars. Immigrants and soldiers from different parts of the Roman Empire brought with them their own deities and beliefs, adding to those of the native Britons.

There is lots of evidence for public and private religious beliefs and practices, from figurines of gods and goddesses that may have stood in people's homes to public temples. The objects unearthed on this site are important clues to understanding the mysterious religious rituals that took place there.

## Was the Temple of Mithras the only temple in Londinium?

No, there were others. Some have been found through archaeological excavations, for example near where the Old Bailey stands today and one found at Tabard Square in Southwark, while others are known about through inscriptions that have been found. There may also have been a Roman temple on the site of St Paul's Cathedral. The Temple of Mithras is the only temple where the building and the identity of the god it was dedicated to are known.

## Did people believe in Mithraism and other Roman gods at the same time?

Yes. In Roman culture it was common for people to practice and follow the public religion but also have personal, private beliefs. Mithraism was a private belief and it emerged at a similar time to two others: the cult of Isis (an Egyptian goddess) and the earliest form of Christianity. All three of these religions had their origins in the east of the Roman Empire and gradually travelled to Britain.



Group of pots found in the Walbrook stream area, probably used for votive offerings  
©Museum of London



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# Mithraism

## Who was Mithras?

Mithras was a deity who was worshipped in the Roman world alongside the Roman public gods (eg Jupiter, Mars and Venus). The origins of Mithras are unclear, but it is possible that the Romans used the earlier Persian god Mitra as their inspiration.

Mithras is usually depicted as a young man in a 'Phrygian cap' (a conical hat with folds so the top tips forwards). The most commonly found scene depicting Mithras shows him sacrificing a bull. This scene is called the 'tauroctony'. This was the key icon of the cult and often included another common Mithraic image, the signs of the zodiac. It was believed that new life sprung from the death of the bull, an animal often seen as a symbol of strength and fertility. Mithraism was a religious belief practiced by a small, closed group rather than being a mainstream part of Roman religion. It is thought that it was only open to men, including soldiers, traders, merchants and freedmen.



The head of Mithras  
© Museum of London



Sculpture showing Mithras slaying a bull



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# The first Londoners

## When was London founded?

London was founded sometime around AD 50, a few years after the Roman Conquest in AD 43. It was built quickly as a frontier trading town, with both Romans and Britons quick to take advantage of new trade opportunities that came with the Roman Army. This town was called Londinium.

## What was the Thames valley like before Londinium was founded?

Before the Roman Conquest there were Iron Age farmsteads in the Thames valley area, but no Iron Age town. The area that would become London was centred around the Walbrook stream, which flowed south into the Thames, creating a valley between two hills to the west and east. The Thames itself was much wider, with more islands and marsh created by the tides.

## What did early Londinium look like?

The first buildings in Londinium were made of wood and clay. A bridge quickly connected the north and south sides of the Thames. This bridge would come to be known as London Bridge. The town grew out from the area around London Bridge to the Walbrook stream. The first defences around the town were ditches.



Artist's impression of Londinium in AD 200  
© Peter Froste/Museum of London



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## Who were the first Londoners?

The first residents of the city were a mixture of soldiers, merchants, crafts people, freedmen, citizens and slaves. Britons from surrounding tribes and people looking for new opportunities.

## What was found from the early Roman period?

The recent excavations revealed part of the Walbrook stream and the area to the immediate east. The waterlogged conditions left by the Walbrook created the perfect conditions for the survival of archaeological material. These included Roman timber buildings, fences and yards, tools, money, clothes and even documents – all of which are helping transform our understanding of early Roman Londinium. The astonishing quantity, range and preservation of the objects recovered from the site makes this the most significant archaeological project undertaken in London in recent decades.

## What are the ‘star’ artefacts found at the site of the London Mithraeum?

The most exciting artefacts are made of organic materials, such as wood and leather which rarely survive. These include 405 wooden writing tablets, 87 of which had writing that could be deciphered. They introduce us to some of the first inhabitants of this new city, a Roman provincial capital with a diverse mix of businessmen, slaves and freedmen. They reveal the names of over 100 early Londoners, including Taurus the hauler and Tertius the brewer. One tablet dated to 8 January AD 57, is the earliest known handwritten document recorded from Britain. Another carries the earliest known reference to the name Londinium. The tablets not only reflect life in Roman Britain and beyond, but carry the voices of its Roman inhabitants in the first half-century.

## What are some of the ‘star’ artefacts and displays at the Museum of London?

The **Roman London** gallery is full of fascinating evidence about the lives of real Londoners, including tombstones and skeletons, weapons, tools, cooking utensils, games, jewellery, shoes and other everyday objects. A few star artefacts include a leather bikini, which probably belonged to a young girl acrobat, the Bucklersbury mosaic, Temple of Mithras statues and the tomb of the Spitalfields woman.

Models of the forum and port, complete with miniature figures of people from all walks of life going about their daily life, bring the bustling city to life. Recreated rooms featuring original artefacts, include a triclinium (dining room) and kitchen. One small room even features a Roman toilet.



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# Museum of London

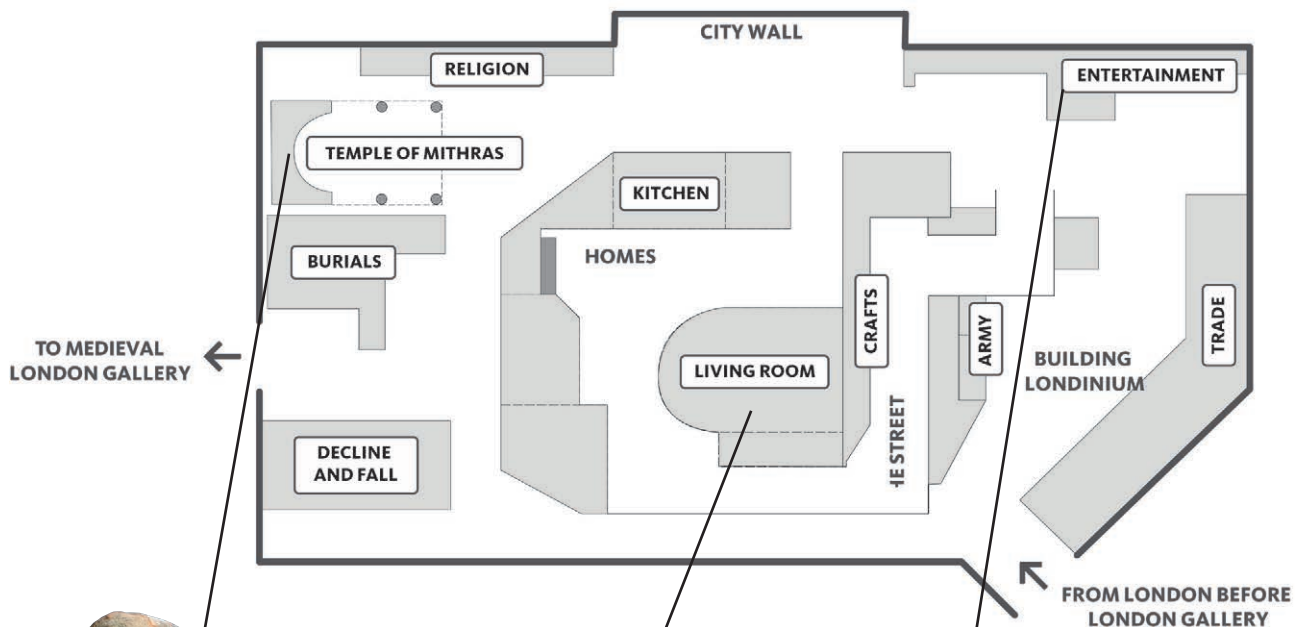
## Gallery plan

The **Roman London** gallery tells the story of Londinium between AD 50 and AD 410 and using its progression from a small frontier town to a bustling walled and wealthy city, through to its decline as the Roman administration withdrew.

Themes covered during the morning visit to the London Mithraeum and the guided walk will be reinforced by investigation of the artefacts and exhibits at the museum.

## ROMAN LONDON

AD 50-410



The head of Mithras  
© Museum of London



Reconstructed Roman living room c.300 AD  
© Museum of London



Leather bikini probably worn by female acrobat  
© Museum of London

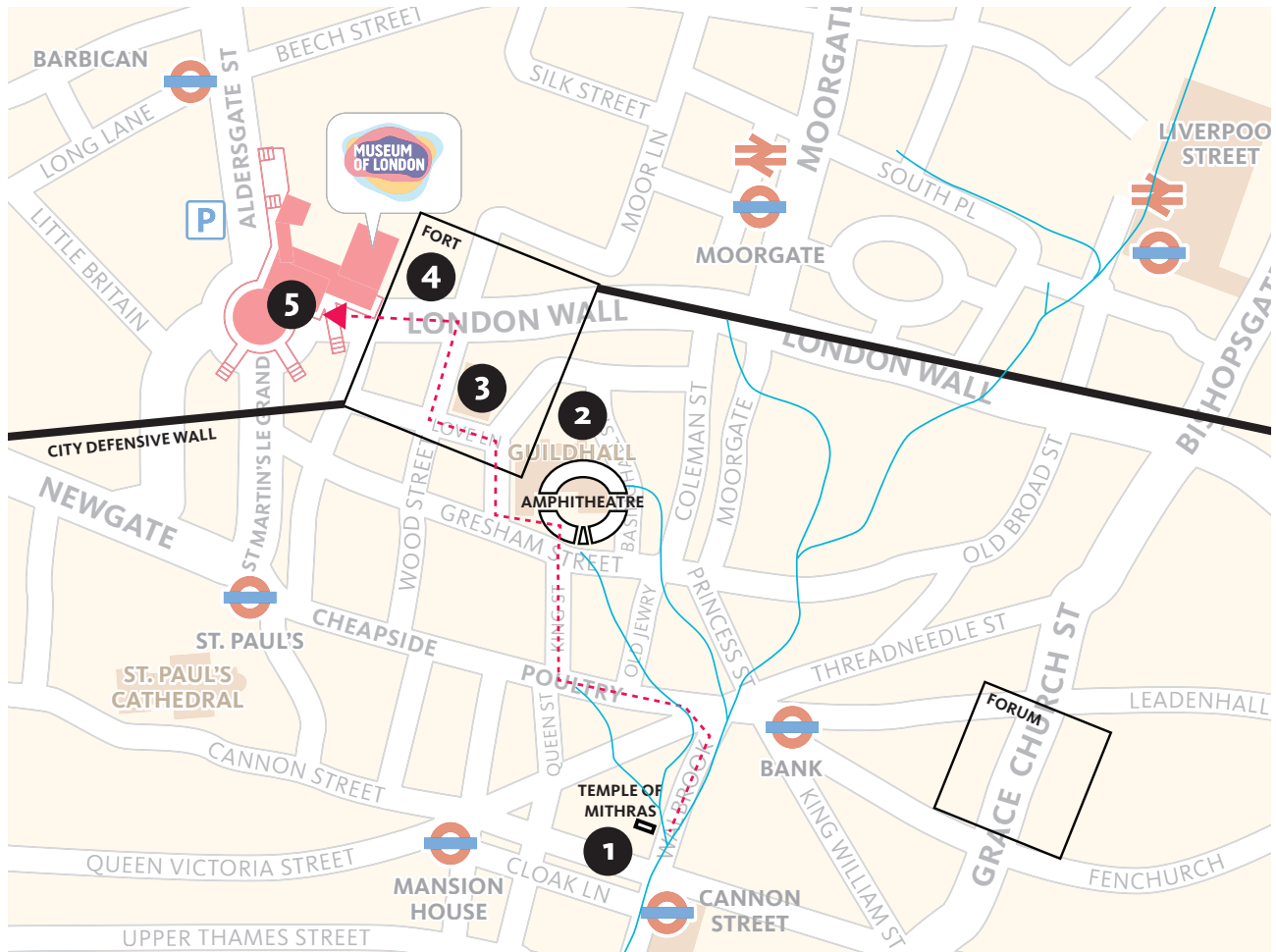


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## Between sites

The following pages provide information on the area covered by the walk.



- 1 London Mithraeum
- 2 Guildhall Yard and London's Roman Amphitheatre
- 3 Wood Street Police Station
- 4 Old Roman wall and fort
- 5 Museum of London

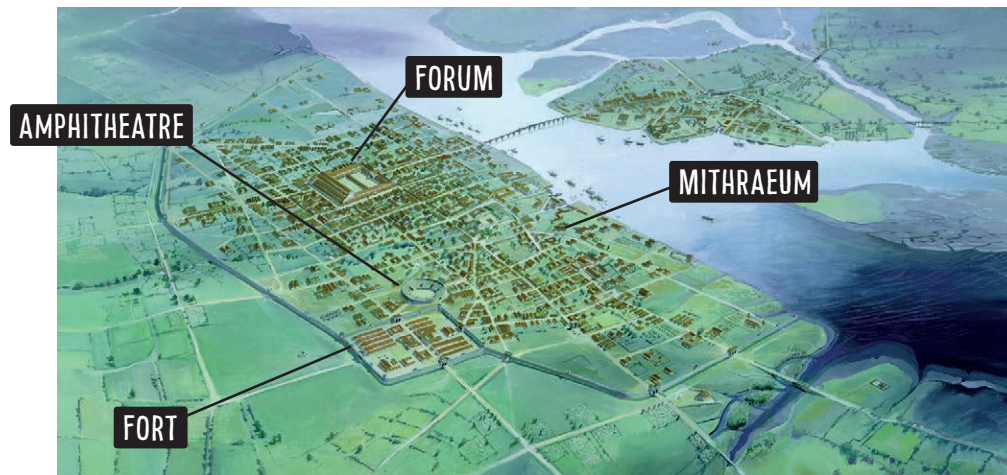


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## 1. London Mithraeum

As we leave the Mithraeum pupils will be encouraged to look around, and consider how London today compares to the city in Roman times. Did the Romans have restaurants, takeaway food, businesses, roads? How big was Londinium in comparison to London today?

On the walk we will stop and discuss some archaeological discoveries that have helped archaeologists to map the city of Londinium. Can pupils imagine what archaeological evidence might be below their feet?



Artist's impression of Londinium in AD 200  
© Peter Froste/Museum of London

## 2. Guildhall Yard and Art Gallery (site of London's Roman Amphitheatre)

London's Roman Amphitheatre was discovered by archaeologists during the construction of the Guildhall Art Gallery in 1988. A section of the remains, including the eastern entrance, is now preserved in the basement. The size of the arena has been marked in black slate in the Guildhall Yard. The amphitheatre was one of the largest and most impressive buildings in Londinium. It was similar in design and size to a modern sports stadium.

The magnificent Grade I listed medieval Guildhall was built between 1411 and 1440. This was where the Lord Mayor of London and the ruling merchant class held court and made laws. The Lord Mayor of London is specific to the City of London Corporation and different from the role of Mayor of London (who oversees policy across the whole of City of London borough).



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### 3. Wood Street Police Station

We use this stop to discuss law and order in Londinium, and how the military had the role of the police today. In the Museum of London you can see a military tombstone erected in memory of Celsus, a speculator (a type of military policemen, who may have worshipped at the Mithraeum).

We also read the Latin inscription (which translates as: 'The Lord guide us') and the Roman numerals (providing the date of construction as 1965).



Latin inscriptions to be found over entrance to Wood Street Police Station

### 4. Old Roman wall and fort

The fort (home of the Roman Army) was constructed at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. Protected by strong walls and four impressive gates, it could accommodate at least 1,000 soldiers. Archaeologists have uncovered barrack blocks for soldiers and one of the fort gates. Londinium's defences were strengthened towards the end of the 2nd century AD with the construction of defensive walls, running for more than two miles around the whole city and incorporating the north and west walls of the fort. The shape of the old city walls can still be seen in the shape of the City of London today.

The fort and city walls gradually fell into disrepair after the Romans left Britain. However, in the early medieval period, when London re-emerged as a thriving city, new defences were constructed following the line of the old Roman walls. The medieval defences were in turn incorporated into later building. The archaeological remains of the walls were discovered as a result of bomb damage during World War II.



Remains of the city walls

### 5. Museum of London

The **Roman London** gallery tells the story of Londinium between AD 50 and AD 410. During the museum visit our expert facilitators will help pupils make links between the artefacts on display and information covered earlier in the day.



Model of London bridge and port, on display in the Roman London gallery



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# Practical guidelines

## Teacher preparation visits

We recommend teachers make a preparatory visit to both sites and familiarise themselves with the route of the guided walk between the sites. This will help teachers carry out their risk assessment. Please contact the Museum of London [info@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:info@museumoflondon.org.uk) and London Mithraeum [mithraeum@bloomberg.net](mailto:mithraeum@bloomberg.net).

## Risk assessments

It is the teacher's responsibility to carry out a risk assessment. Both sites carry out regular assessments of all public spaces for their own use (these documents are available on request from the London Mithraeum and Museum of London).

## Organising your group

Teachers and accompanying adults are responsible for the behaviour and welfare of their pupils at all times during your visit. Please ensure you have at least one adult for every six pupils and that the adults accompany them at all times.

## SEND provision

Both the London Mithraeum and the Museum of London are fully accessible. The walk between the two sites involves stairs, but a lift and escalator are available. The London Mithraeum has atmospheric low light levels and uses soundscapes. To ensure that your visit meets the needs of your pupils please discuss any specific needs with the Museum of London Primary Schools Programme Manager [nsprigge@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:nsprigge@museumoflondon.org.uk)

## Photography

Photography (without flash or tripod use) is welcomed at both sites. These images may only be reproduced for educational purposes, which include reproducing the image as a classroom teaching aide or as part of a school project. Any publication of these images for any other purpose is forbidden, which includes publication on any website.



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## Arrival, cloakroom and toilets at each site

**London Mithraeum:** Please go to the London Mithraeum main entrance. You will be led to the cloakroom and toilets before the workshop begins.

**Museum of London:** Your guide will help you to check in when you arrive at the museum and direct you to your allocated lunch tables, cloakroom area and toilets.

## Lunch at the Museum of London

You will be allocated a 30-minute slot in the lunch area. Eating and drinking is not permitted in the museum galleries, so please ensure that all food is left in the cloakroom.

## Organising your group for the museum gallery visit

Your visit to the **Roman London** gallery will be supported by a museum facilitator. Please remind your pupils to respect the needs of other members of the public visiting the museum.



Pupils in the Roman London gallery

## The Museum of London shop

The shop sells a variety of books and products to support learning, as well as pocket money items. Please request a time slot in the shop or if you would prefer, the shop offers a time saving goody bag service at great value. Contact the shop by email [shop@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:shop@museumoflondon.org.uk) or call **020 7814 5600**.



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## Guided walk advice

The following advice is provided to help teachers assess risks for the walk which passes through a busy part of the City. The walk has been designed specifically for school groups and will be guided. It is suitable for wheelchairs. Lift access is available as an alternative to the escalator from the highwalk to street level.

### Before setting off we recommend that you:

- plan the route to the London Mithraeum for the start of the day, and from the museum at the end of the day
- decide whether to take escalator, lift or stairs up to the highwalk at Wood Street
- ensure an adequate adult:child ratio
- ensure pupils have used toilets before leaving the Mithraeum
- ask adult helpers to check that children have suitable clothing and shoes for weather conditions
- give a short safety warning to pupils and adult helpers (keep together, watch your step, stay on pavements and cross roads with adult helpers).

### On the walk:

- position adults clearly. Teachers should join the guide at the front of the group and allocate an adult to stay at the rear to ensure the group stays together
- look back at regular intervals and after every road crossing. At traffic lights the group should wait for the green light. If part of the group has crossed and lights change, the remaining adults and children should wait. Only when the entire group is safely across, will group move on
- Love Lane has no traffic lights to cross at. If part of the group has crossed and the lights change, the remaining adults and children should wait. The group should only move on when the entire class is safely across. We recommend you position two adults in the centre of the road (facing both directions to stop any traffic if required)
- expect the unexpected, for example road works. Your guide will alter the route if needed on the day and work with accompanying adults to ensure safety at all times.



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# Pre and post visit activities

## Websites:

[londonmithraeum.com](http://londonmithraeum.com)

[museumoflondon.org.uk/sch/roman-london-pocket-history](http://museumoflondon.org.uk/sch/roman-london-pocket-history)

## Pre-visit activity

### Roman deities and their symbols

This activity will help pupils connect the god/goddesses and their symbols, and to recognise Mithras when they visit.

**Research:** Roman Londoners would have recognised different gods and goddesses by the symbols that represented them. For Mithras, it's his conical hat; for Diana it was a bow and arrow. Set pupils the task of researching Roman gods/goddesses and their symbols, (include Mithras in your list).

**Make:** Pupils draw god/goddess cards and/or god/goddess symbol cards.

**Play the game:** Mix up all the cards and give each table a random draw so that each pupil has a different card. Can they work out which god or goddess is represented by each card? Tables can compete for the number of correct answers.

**Alternative:** Make 15 symbols cards and 15 god/goddess name cards. Give each pupil one card and ask them to find their partner card (to match the gods and goddess to their symbol).

## Post-visit activities

1. Create a class book, film or digital presentation about what pupils have learnt about the Romans including using photographs or films taken during their visit. You will find a good selection of images of objects which you can include on the Museum of London's online Picture Bank or Collections Online.
2. Ask your pupils to imagine that they are going to make an offering to the gods to ask them for help. Draw your object and write down words to describe it and what you will say to the gods.



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# Planning your journey

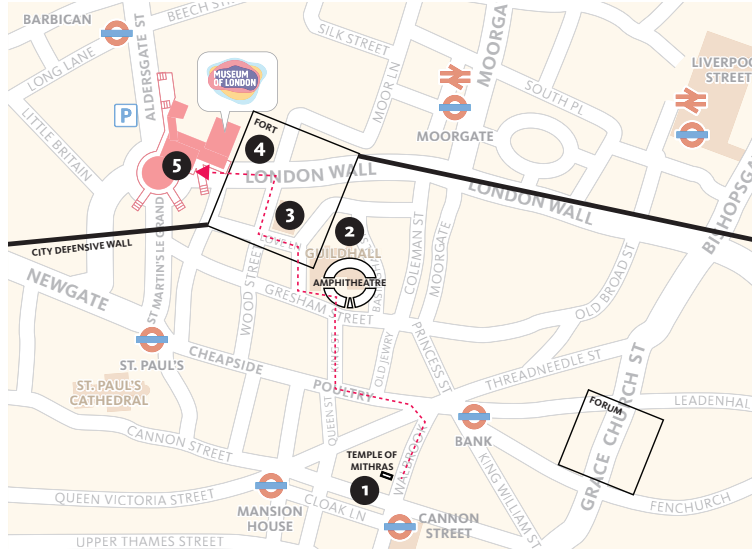
Please note that your visit starts at the London Mithraeum and ends at the Museum of London.

## London Mithraeum

12 Walbrook, London EC4N 8AA  
[londonmithraeum.com](http://londonmithraeum.com)  
[info@londonmithraeum.com](mailto:info@londonmithraeum.com)

## Museum of London

150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN  
020 7001 9844  
[museumoflondon.org.uk](http://museumoflondon.org.uk)  
[info@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:info@museumoflondon.org.uk)






## Parking

Due to local restrictions it is not possible to bring a coach to the London Mithraeum. We recommend travelling by public transport. If that is not possible please contact the London Mithraeum at [mithraeum@bloomberg.net](mailto:mithraeum@bloomberg.net) to discuss alternatives.

## Free travel

All schools within Greater London can take advantage of Transport for London's School Party Travel Scheme. See [www.tfl.gov.uk/schoolparty](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/schoolparty) or call London Underground Customer Services on 0845 330 9881 for details.

-  **Arrival** – Cannon Street, Bank
-  **Departure** – Moorgate, St Paul's, Barbican
-  Cannon Street, Moorgate, Liverpool Street, City Thameslink



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