

∞**Billingsgate Roman Bathhouse**∞

by Valy Christie and Mina Holland

In 1848, the remnants of the Billingsgate Roman House and Baths were initially found. The Roman House was built between the second and third centuries AD. Before additional renovation at the site in the late 1960s allowed archaeologists to further study the ruins, they were kept intact in the basement of the London Coal Exchange.

The rich Roman heritage that has survived 2,000 years of construction, fires, and bombings can be found beneath the ancient streets of the Square Mile. Enter the basement of an office building on Lower Thames Street to explore the Billingsgate Roman House and Baths, one of the most intriguing ruins of Roman London. Constructed approximately 150 years ago and expanded a century later, it remained occupied until the end of Roman London in the early 5th century A.D.

By the third century, a bathhouse with a caldarium (hot chamber), tepidarium (warm room), and frigidarium (cold room) had been constructed in the courtyard. The building was used until the fifth century but, like the rest of London, the edifice was eventually abandoned to disrepair. It's interesting to note that an Anglo-Saxon brooch was discovered inside broken roof tiles. As part of the first Ancient Monuments Act of 1882, the location was to become London's first officially recognized protected heritage site.

Visitors in London should explore the Billingsgate Roman House and Baths by getting close to the well-preserved archaeological remains, which appear to be in pristine condition as if the archaeologists have only recently left the area.



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Pictures

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