

## Romans in Brent Learning Resource

Brent Museum and Archives offer a wide range of resources including workshops, handling sessions, loans boxes, YouTube videos and PDFs to support you and your learners in a range of topics. Check out our [schools pages](#) and our [online learning resources page](#) for more of our resources. [Join our schools mailing list here](#). You can visit our [website](#) and explore our [online catalogue](#) for details for exhibitions, events and to search for material relating to your local area.



### Contents

Introduction.....	2
Roman Brent YouTube videos .....	3
Amphora handle activities.....	4
Samian Ware activities.....	6
Mortarium Activities.....	9
Useful links for further research, information and ideas relating to the Romans in Britain. ....	12

## Introduction

**Brent Museum and Archives offers the following ways to engage with our Roman collections – you can combine them in the way that suits you best.**

- **Online only:** learners engage with our Roman artefact videos and the activities below as part of your scheme of work at school.
- **Visit to Brent Museum and Archives:** learners view the Roman coins and pottery on display in the museum (free but please book in advance).
- **Workshop at your school or Brent Museum and Archives:** learners learn about the impact of the Romans on Brent and handle real Roman artefacts. Workshops are 1 hour long and do not require any prior knowledge. Up to 4 workshops per day can be booked at your school and up to 2 or 3 workshops per day at Brent Museum and Archives (depending on lunch requirements).
- **Handling session at your school or at Brent Museum and Archives:** learners build on their knowledge of Roman Brent, gained through watching our Roman artefact videos and taking part in the activities below **before** their 25 minute handling session which focusses on handling Roman artefacts. This option reduces the cost/per learner and enables more learners to engage with the artefacts when time is limited. Up to 8 workshops per day can be booked at your school and up to 4 -6 workshops per day at Brent Museum and Archives (depending on lunch requirements).

### **Aims of the videos and activities in this resource**

- To explore Roman life in Brent using real Roman objects alongside a range of supporting resources
- To investigate Roman objects using images, enquiry skills and video resources
- To explore the materials and methods used to make Roman objects

### **Learning outcomes**

- Pupils will understand how to examine evidence of Roman activity in Brent
- Pupils will relate this understanding to how Roman people may have lived and worked locally
- Pupils will understand the links between Roman life in Brent and the Roman Empire more broadly
- Pupils will understand the impact of the Roman empire on life in Britain
- Pupils will have the opportunity to expand their vocabulary around Roman objects and ways of life

## Roman Brent YouTube videos

[Roman playlist on YouTube](#)

### Mortarium



### Amphora handles



### Samian Ware



## Amphora handle activities

### 1. Discussion

Before you watch the video clip, look closely at this image of the amphora handles and ask the questions below to facilitate class discussion.

- What material do you think these objects are made from? Where does this material come from?
- How old do you think they might be? What makes you think this?
- Do they look like whole objects or parts of larger objects that have perhaps broken off?
- If you think they were part of an object, what part were they? What was their job?
- What do you think the whole object might have looked like?
- What would the larger or whole object have been used for?
- How do you think these pieces were made? Do they all look the same? Were they made in the same way?
- Where do you think they might have been found?



## 2. Fact File

Suggestions for ways to use these statements: Divide the class into five groups and ask them to: research their statement, draw pictures of what they found out, explain to the other groups/rest of the class what they discovered.

- Amphorae were jars used to transport food and drink, such as dried fish, olives, dried cereal grains (such as barley), fermented fish sauce (known as garum), honey, milk, olive oil, wine, or even water.
- Amphorae had two handles, used for carrying. The name 'amphora' comes from the Greek word 'amphi-phoreus', which means 'carried on both sides'.
- Amphorae existed in different sizes, between 5 litres and 50 litres.
- They were most often made of clay but could also be made from metal.
- The tops would have been sealed with stoppers made from clay or resin, or even ceramic lids, but very few of these survive today.



## Samian Ware activities

### 1. Discussion

Before you watch the video clip, look closely at this image of the Samian Ware sherds and ask the questions below to facilitate class discussion.

- How old are these objects?
- What larger objects do you think they are from?
- What details do you notice?
- How do you think the patterns were made?
- What is the traditional way to make pottery? What kind of machine would you need? (Remember the Romans wouldn't have had electricity!)
- You may notice that these objects have a shiny surface. Can you guess how this was done?
- If pottery is made from soft clay, how does it become hard so that it can be used?
- What do the shiny surfaces and the patterns tell us about who may have owned these objects and how they would have used them? Are they every-day items? Are they for poor Roman people? What do you think they would have been used for?



## 2. Fact File

The Roman period is famous for many things like gladiators, mosaics and emperors, but it is also known for the introduction of a red glossy pottery, called Terra Sigillata or known under its more familiar name as Samian ware. This pottery was made in the first and second centuries in south, east and central Gaul, now modern day France and Germany. Some pieces are plain, but many are highly decorated with animals, plants and figures. Samian ware not only gives us an insight into the fashions of the Roman Empire, but it also has a very important job in helping archaeologists date Roman sites.

Suggestions for ways to use these statements: Divide the class into five groups and ask them to: research their statement, draw pictures of what they found out, explain to the other groups/rest of the class what they discovered.

- Samian Ware is Roman tableware. It was the most common high-quality pottery used in Roman Britain.
- Samian pottery found in Britain was mainly made in France, known at the time as Gaul.
- Samian is fine, hard and has a red gloss. The colour comes from a mineral called illite in the clay. (You can also find black Samian pottery).
- Some pieces of Samian Ware are plain, and some are decorated. They are found in different sizes, designs, or forms, including bowls, dishes and cups.
- Plain Samian is wheel thrown then dipped by hand in to slip (a mixture of clay and water) before being fired in kilns.
- Decorated Samian is made from a mould. The clay is pressed into the mould, set on a wheel, the bowl is drawn up, dried and then shrinks off the mould. Next the base is added, dipped in slip, dried then placed in the kiln.
- We can sometimes tell who made the pottery or the moulds by looking for maker's stamps.
- This also helps us to work out when the pottery was made, as certain makers worked at certain times.

### Samian Ware Patterns

Samian Ware was sometimes decorated with images and patterns such as animals, gods, gladiators, mythical beasts, flowers and plants. You can see [how Samian ware was made here](#).

Try designing your own Samian Ware pots using a simple jug or pot outline and adding your own illustrations or use the template on the next page to see if you can mirror the bowl and pot designs provided.



# Samian Ware illustration worksheet





## Mortarium Activities

### 1. Discussion

Before you watch the video clip, look closely at this image of the Mortarium and ask the questions below to facilitate class discussion.

- This object was found in central London. The Romans had another name for the city. Do you know what it was?
- How old do you think this object might be?
- What do you think it was used for? How was it used?
- What is it made from?
- Can you spot any damage?
- There are actually three holes altogether (one has been repaired). How do you think this damage happened? What does the repair to the third hole tell us about how much the owner valued this item?
- Can you spot the stamp at the bottom of the object? What information do you think this might give us?



## 1. Fact file

Suggestions for ways to use these statements: Divide the class into five groups and ask them to: research their statement, draw pictures of what they found out, explain to the other groups/rest of the class what they discovered.

- Romans enjoyed eating sauces, relishes, herbs and spices. As these ingredients were often ground or puréed, a strong mixing-bowl was needed for food preparation.



- A large flat stone would be used to grind the ingredients against the side of the bowl until they formed a powder or a paste.
- The clay was mixed with small stones before it was heated in the kiln to make it much stronger.
- Many mortaria include a spout on one side to allow the ingredients to be poured into a dish or cooking pot.
- The maker's name was often stamped on the rim.
- Mortaria were made out of clay or stone.

The mortaria in our video was found in the City of London in 1964. It is made of clay and it was used for grinding and preparing food. This mortaria has a spout. Pieces of flint and quartz stone were added to the clay to create a rough surface. The maker's stamp says 'ALBINVS'. There is also a place stamp 'LVGV DV' and a lead rivet in the bowl. When we discover Roman mortaria they don't always have a name stamped on them. However, of the mortaria found so far in Britain, ones stamped with Albinus' name are the most common which suggests that he was very successful in making and selling his mortaria. His mortaria have mostly been found in St. Albans (Roman name Verulamium) and London. The place where he made the mortaria is

likely to be in Brockley Hills. His mortaria have been found as far as Scotland. Lugudu was a pottery production site in the Brockley Hills area.

## 2. Garum recipe

Watch this instructive video on [how to make the popular roman fish sauce 'garum'](#) (warning: it's not for the faint-hearted!)

You may not want to recreate the recipe from scratch in the classroom, but for a modern sensory experience that gives you an authentic idea of the smell, you could buy a bottle of Asian fish sauce, pour into a bowl and pass around, so that everyone can have a good sniff!

Imagine you are a rich Roman with a taste for garum. Use the instructions from the film to write step by step instructions for how to make it by re-creating the recipe and then storing the garum carefully in an empty amphora.

## 3. Cheese spread recipe

Find [the recipe for a Roman cheese spread](#) known as 'moretum'.



Don't worry if you don't have your own classroom mortarium, a modern mortar and pestle such as this will work in exactly the same way!

You might want to try designing a full Roman feast menu using the links provided on our 'Useful Links' page at the end of the resource.

Do you think you would have enjoyed the Roman diet? Is there anything you wouldn't have tried?

[How to grind herbs and spices with a pestle and mortar](#)

Useful links for further research, information and ideas relating to the Romans in Britain.

### **Food and Drink Videos:**

[Informative 1970s television video featuring a recreation of an authentic Roman banquet](#)

[Horrible Histories Rotten Romans: Elagabalus Come Dine With Me](#)

[Video featuring Roman garum recipe](#)

### **Food and Drink Resources and Information:**

[Extensive website about Roman Britain including a vast array of recipes categorised by the course they would have been served in at a feast](#)

[Roman cheese dip recipe](#)

[Fact file of Romano-British cooking featuring expandable images](#)

[Article about Roman food including food sources and easy roman recipes](#)

[Nutrition focussed Roman banquet resource](#)

[Simple Roman food facts](#)

[Facts about Roman food traditions, including a quiz](#)

### **Pottery**

[Brief modern film featuring all three pottery methods used to make Roman Samian Ware \(wheel throwing, moulding and hand making\)](#)

### **Archaeology**

[National hub for Young Archaeologists' Clubs](#)

[Teacher PowerPoint presentation and notes about Roman Britain from the British Museum](#)