

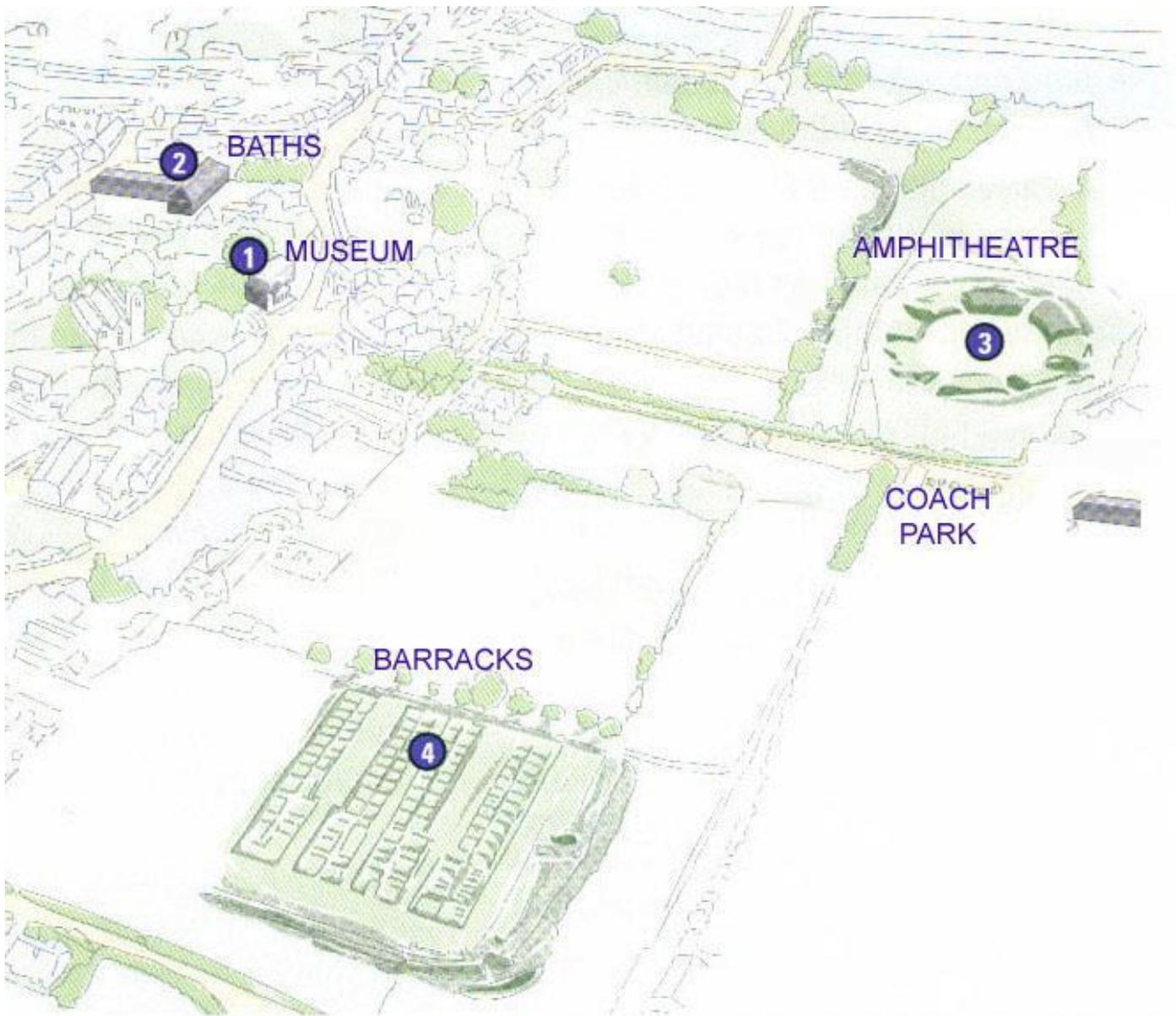
Let's Discover the Amphitheatre and Barracks



Where is everything?

The National Roman Legion Museum and the Roman Fortress Baths are both on High Street, the B4236, the main road running through Caerleon.

Coach parking is on Broadway, the left turning off High Street, opposite the museum.



Directions to the Amphitheatre

From the Roman Fortress Baths – with Baths behind you, walk across car park to road. Turn right and walk along the pavement to the zebra crossing. Cross road, turn into Broadway, and walk along until you see the coach parking area. The amphitheatre is opposite the coach parking.

From the National Roman Legion Museum – turn left out of museum, cross main road at zebra crossing. Turn into Broadway, and walk along until you see the coach parking area. The amphitheatre entrance is opposite the coach parking.

From the Barracks – the amphitheatre entrance is diagonally opposite the Broadway entrance to the Barracks footpath, directly opposite the coach parking bays.

Directions to the West Gate and Barracks

From the Roman Fortress Baths – with Baths behind you, walk across car park to road. Turn right and walk along pavement to zebra crossing. Cross road, turn into Broadway. Walk along Broadway for about 100 yards until you see the West Gate plaque in the pavement.

From the National Roman Legion Museum – turn left out of museum, cross main road at zebra crossing. Cross road, turn into Broadway. Walk along Broadway for about 100 yards until you see the West Gate plaque in the pavement.

From the Amphitheatre – follow the pavement from the end of the coach parking area towards the grassed area fenced with wooden posts. You will find the West Gate plaque set into the pavement, just after the corner of the field, where the road narrows.

Using your loculus

This replica loculus contains instructions, information and objects designed to help your group understand how the Romans used the amphitheatre and barracks.

Loculus is Latin for satchel. Satchels were part of the Roman legionary soldier's marching pack and would have held rations and personal items.

Contents:

A4 laminated instruction booklet, for use by group leaders

A4 laminated booklet of images, including photographs, reconstruction drawings and maps.

Replicas items: caltrop (4 pronged metal spike in dark brown leather pouch), coins (denarii & aureus in light brown leather pouch), sponge on a stick.

Group leader instructions:

Please follow the instructions in this booklet to take you to and around the 10 locations in the amphitheatre and barracks.

For each location there are instructions and explanations in **bold**, text in red can be read aloud to the group, an image and sometimes an object or an activity.

After visiting the amphitheatre and barracks please hand the loculus and contents to staff at the Fortress Baths or National Roman Legion Museum.

Barracks

Point 1 – West Gate plaque, Broadway



This plaque in the pavement marks the site of the West gate of the Fortress. This was one of four gates in and out of the Fortress. Imagine large, heavy wooden gates and stone walls almost as tall as the trees. If the gates were closed, nobody could get in or out. It would have been very scary for the local Celtic people to look up and see such a sight.

Point 2 – Fortress Defences

Walk from the West Gate towards the coach park area, and turn right into the footpath immediately before the hedge.



Walk along the footpath until you see an earth path leading to a gap in the embankment on your right.

Take your group down the path into the bottom of the ditch and show them image 1 – a reconstruction drawing of the ditch and wall defences – from the image booklet.

6000 soldiers lived inside the Fortress. Ditches just like this one would surround the walls of the Fortress.

Ask the group if they can suggest the answers to these questions:

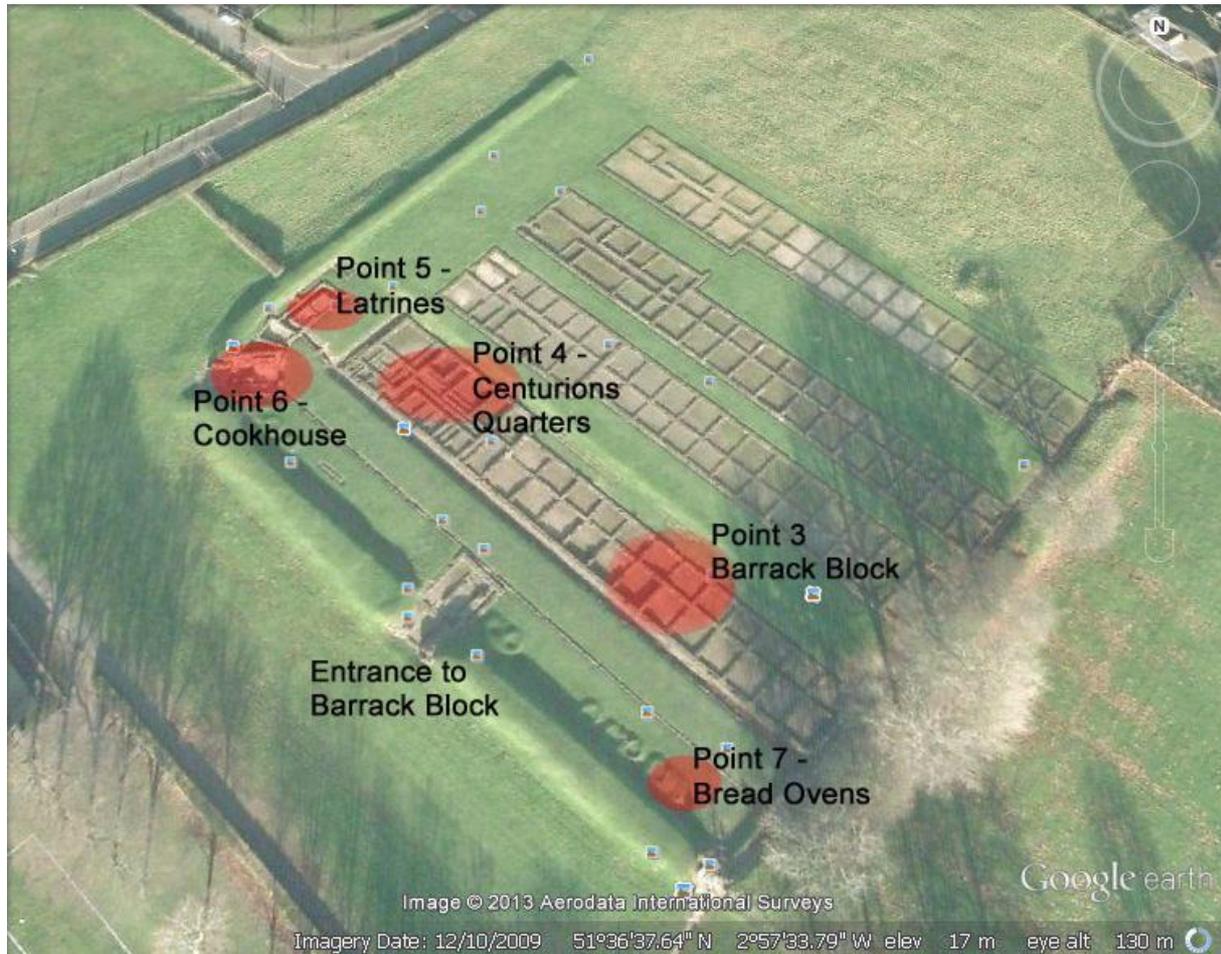
Why was the ditch so deep? The ditch would have filled with water and it would have been difficult to cross.

Why were there towers along the walls of the Fortress? You can see much further from high towers than from the ground. You would be able to see your enemy when they are further away, which would give you more time to prepare.

Guess the object – Carefully take the caltrop out of the leather pouch and show it to the group. Ask the group what they think it is and what it might have been used for.

This is a caltrop. Romans would scatter these on the ground, in the ditches and around their camps to protect them from their enemies, the Celts. Thousands of years later archaeologists discovered lots of these whilst they were digging in the ground here. Caltrops always land with a point facing upwards, and are hard to see in the grass. Stepping on one would badly injure a person or a horse.

Point 3 – Barrack Blocks



Walk up the path from the ditch into the Barracks area. Immediately in front of you are the remains of the walls of the barrack blocks.

This is the barrack block where the soldiers would live. There would have been up to 6000 soldiers living in the Fortress nearly 2000 years ago.

Show the group image 2 – a reconstruction drawing of the barrack block – from the images booklet

8 soldiers slept in bunk beds in each of the larger rooms and the smaller rooms were probably used to store their armour, weapons and shields.

Walk along the barrack block towards the far end, Point 4

The layout at this end of the block is different. What do you notice? There are more rooms in this section and they are larger.

These rooms were the home of the Centurion. What was the Centurion? The man in charge of all of the soldiers in this legion. He had a much bigger place to live. His

family and his slaves lived here too. Some of the rooms were bedrooms, some were offices and there was also a private toilet as the family would not have wanted to share the toilets the soldiers used.

Take out the silver coins from the suede pouch and pass them around the group.

This is a denarius. It was a very common Roman coin, made from silver, and was about a day's wage for a legionary soldier. Soldiers would earn about 300 denarii a year.

Show the gold coins from the suede pouch and pass them around the group.

This is an aureus. It was made from gold. The Centurion would earn more money than the ordinary legionary soldiers and it is likely that he would have been paid in these gold coins.

Point 5 – Latrines

Beyond the Centurion's rooms, before the grass bank, are the remains of the latrines.

Show the group image 3 – a reconstruction drawing of the latrines – in the image booklet.

As you can see, Roman soldiers went to the toilet together. They sat on a long bench with holes in it, which was built over the drainage ditch. Water ran along the drainage ditch and took the waste away. Although the ditch was under the ground it ran alongside the barrack block so it was probably very smelly here, especially during the summer.

Guess the Object – show the group the sponge on a stick. Ask the group to suggest what it was used for.

There was no toilet paper in Roman times. Roman soldiers cleaned their bottoms using sponges tied onto sticks. They were kept in pots of vinegar in the latrines. The vinegar would have killed the germs and kept them clean. There were gutters in front of the toilet bench, and holes in the front of the bench. Soldiers pushed the sponges through the holes to clean their bottoms. They then rinsed the sponges in the gutter before putting them back into the vinegar pots.

Point 6 – the Cook House

There were several cookhouses in the Fortress. They once had raised platforms inside, which were probably the bases for cooking hearths and ovens. The cook houses were not very big.

The soldiers probably took it in turns to cook for each other, they may have had rotas or for some soldiers it may have been their job to be the cook.

The soldiers would have had frying pans and big stew pans to cook their food in and would have roasted meat over the fire. Romans liked to flavour their food with spices, olive oil and a fish sauce called garum. Food was brought over by boat from other countries in the Roman Empire to Caerleon.

Every soldier had his own cutlery set to eat with. It needed to be small and easy to carry, so that they could carry it with them when they travelled.

Point 7 – the Bread Ovens



As well as cooking indoors, the soldiers baked bread every day. The remains of 10 bread ovens are still visible, but if you look at the gaps between them, it is likely that there were at least 20 ovens here originally. There may have been more of these ovens elsewhere in the fortress, and it is possible that each barrack block had its own oven. The ovens were heated by burning wood, so the soldiers would need to go and collect firewood and bring it back here.

Ask group if they know what ingredients are needed to make bread

- Flour, salt, water, yeast and a little oil

It takes a long time to make bread. The soldiers would have to grind the grain into flour, mix in the other ingredients and knead the dough. The dough would be left to rise before reshaping it again and then cooking it in the oven. All of the loaves were cooked together so how did the soldiers know which was their loaf?

Show the group image 4 – a bread stamp – in the images booklet

This is a bread stamp. You can see it on display at the museum. It was used to stamp each loaf before it went into the oven. Each loaf could then be given to the person who made it.

Now lead your group back the way you came. The amphitheatre entrance is diagonally opposite the Broadway entrance to the Barracks footpath, directly opposite the coach parking bays.

If you are short of time we recommend you cover point 2, the main arena and the activity at the end.

Amphitheatre



Point 1. The main entrance



“Caerleon was once a big and busy town, and on the riverside beyond the amphitheatre was a busy dock where ships brought supplies, and maybe took soldiers from here to other parts of the Roman Empire.

Many people lived here, soldiers in the fort, and traders and craftsmen in the town which grew around the fort. The soldiers who lived here expected to have something to do in their spare time. They could swim in the Baths, but they also wanted entertainment.

The amphitheatre was a big stadium, with seats for about 6000 people, which meant that all the soldiers who lived in the fortress could come here at once. There are six entrances around the arena, so that the people didn't have to queue for too long to get in or out.”

“When we go to a football match or a concert or we go to watch a film we have to pay to get in. In Roman times people would use tokens to get into the amphitheatre to watch the entertainment.”

Point 2. Centre of arena

Enter the arena, walk to the centre. Ask children to look around and imagine this place filled with people in seats above the walls, waiting for the entertainment to start. It would have been noisy, with a great atmosphere – an exciting place to be!

Show the children image 5 – a reconstruction of the amphitheatre – in the image booklet.

“The stone walls around the arena were covered in plaster and painted white with red lines to make them look as if they were built of large white stones. These walls would have been almost as high as the trees. The amphitheatre was a very impressive place to be with 8 arched entrances for the gladiators and beasts to be brought into the arena. There were thousands of wooden seats in rows above the large earth and stone sides of the arena. The best seats would have been at the front but they would have been expensive. Poor people, women and children would sit at the back. The floor of the arena was probably covered in a layer of sand, so that the gladiators didn't slip in mud.”

Ask the children what sorts of activities they think might have taken place here.

“There were fights between men and animals, and fights between men and men, and sometimes there were women gladiators too called gladiatrix. Some of the gladiators were professional gladiators who were very expensive and famous. Just like today's pop stars and sports stars, they were well known and had many fans. Some gladiators were soldiers who liked to fight in their spare time.

Some of the people, who fought for their lives here, were criminals, whose sentences were not to go to prison, but to fight against animals or gladiators. The amphitheatre, which is next to the parade ground, may also have been used by the soldiers as a place where they could train safely, and practice using weapons.”

Point 3. Animal enclosure

“In the Coliseum in Rome, the biggest amphitheatre in the world in Roman times, the animals included lions and leopards brought from Africa, but here in Caerleon the animals were probably wild boar, bears, or wolves, which could be caught locally. The animals were probably treated very badly to make sure that they attacked people when they were released into the arena.

Point 4. The shrine of Nemesis.



“The Romans worshipped many Gods, and believed the Gods controlled their lives. Each God was linked to some aspect of life, for example Mars was the God of War, Neptune was the God of the Sea, and Cupid was the God of Love. Gladiators sat here before going out into the arena to fight. They prayed and made offerings to Nemesis who was the goddess of Fate and Revenge. Other people left curses here hoping to get revenge and justice.”

Guess the object - Show children the image of the curse tablet, image 6 in the image booklet. Ask children to suggest what it might be, and what it was used for. There is the curse tablet on display in the National Roman Legion Museum.

“This is a curse tablet. It is made from lead and was found in the arena here. On the tablet the Latin words read ‘*To the Goddess Nemesis, I give this cloak and these boots. May he who took them not redeem them, save with his life blood*’ The writer of the curse was asking for Nemesis to curse the person who stole his belongings.

Just above here would have been the VIP seats – they were the best seats in the amphitheatre as everyone could see the people who sat there”

Roman soldier training activity.

This activity can take up to 15 minutes

Ask your group to stand in straight lines, in the main arena, about half a metre from the stone walls. Stand in the centre of the arena and say.....

“You are part of the best army in the world. You are soldiers of the second Augustan legion”

Explain the following terms

“Intente (in-ten-tay) attention” – when you say this they must all stand to attention

“Sin” – left – put left foot forward

“Dex” – right – put right foot forward

Now shout ‘intente’, then ‘sin’ or ‘dex’, and tell the children to march around the arena until they get back to where they started.

Ask all of the adults to line up on the other side of the arena, facing the children.

Please take your group to the next point on your timetable, and hand this satchel to the staff there.