



Archaeologists Discover London's Oldest Theatre

Who were the Elizabethans?

- The Elizabethan period lasted between 1558-1603. It is named after the ruler Queen Elizabeth I.
- Queen Elizabeth I was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn.

Archaeologists have discovered London's oldest Elizabethan theatre. Buried in the East End of London, it could reveal the history of the birth of theatres.

Researchers believe that they have found the remains of the Red Lion theatre. It is the oldest purpose-built theatre in London.

At a **dig** in 2019, a team of archaeologists came across an unusual rectangular shape and 144 **timbers**.

The location seems to match that of the Red Lion theatre in historical documents. This suggests that the theatre was built in 1567.

Stephen White, who was in charge of the dig, said the Red Lion theatre "marked the dawn of Elizabethan theatre."

The Red Lion is understood to be the first theatre which was built only to show plays. Before this, theatre was performed at inns and university halls.

Even though this was a theatre, it would have looked a lot different to most theatres today. The theatre would have had no roof and open to all different kinds of weather.

John Brayne, the owner of the theatre, would go on to build another called The Theatre.

The Theatre would host many plays, including a young William Shakespeare's.

William Shakespeare is one of the world's-most famous playwrights. He wrote well-known plays, such as Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet.

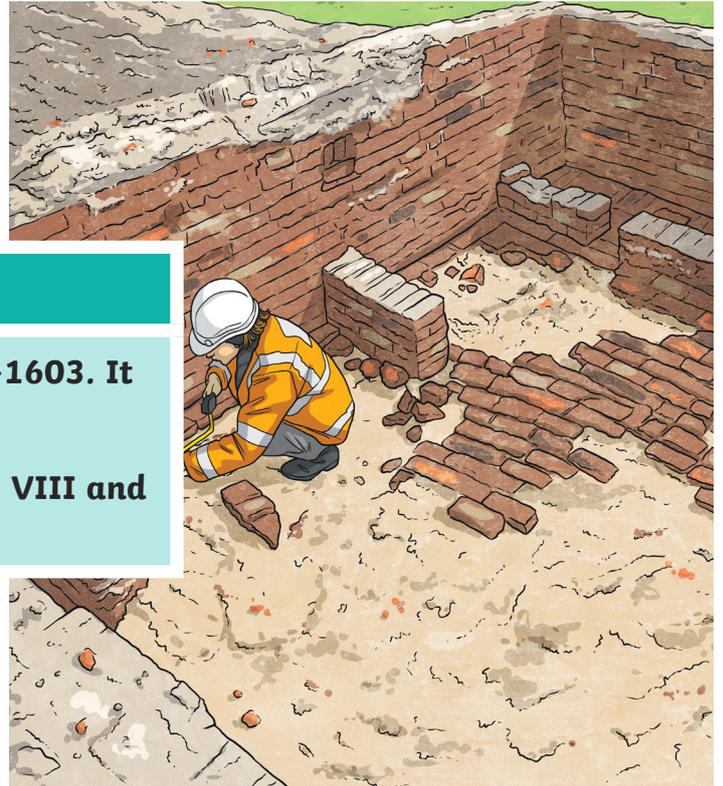


Illustration: Archaeologists find buried theatre.

Even though he lived so long ago, we still study and perform his plays today.

Shakespeare also built his own theatre called the Globe. A replica of that theatre is still used as a theatre in London today.

Archaeologists are still **confirming** their finding to make sure the site is exactly what they think it is.

With so many things buried yet to be found, who knows what is out there still to be discovered next?

Glossary

archaeologists	Someone who studies history through objects.
dig	An archaeological site.
timbers	Wooden beams which are used to support buildings.
confirming	Making sure of something.

Questions

1. What is the name of London's oldest purpose-built theatre?

2. Name one difference, according to the article, between the Red Lion Theatre and most modern day theatres.

3. "Even though he lived so long ago, we still study his plays." This suggests...

- We still don't understand it.
- Shakespeare is not interesting.
- Shakespeare's plays are impressive.
- We need some new plays.

4. Tick each statement to show whether it is a fact or an opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
Archaeologists think they have found London's oldest purpose-built theatre.		
The owner of the Red Lion is inspirational.		
One of the first theatres was called The Theatre.		
Shakespeare is hard to understand.		

5. What do you think historians will think about this news?

6. Summarise the key information in this article in 15 words or fewer.

Answers

1. What is the name of London's oldest purpose-built theatre?

the Red Lion

2. Name one difference, according to the article, between the Red Lion Theatre and most modern day theatres.

The Red Lion theatre had no roof and was open to all different kinds of weathers.

3. "Even though he lived so long ago, we still study his plays." This suggests...

- We still don't understand it.
- Shakespeare is not interesting.
- Shakespeare's plays are impressive.**
- We need some new plays.

4. Tick each statement to show whether it is a fact or an opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
Archaeologists think they have found London's oldest purpose-built theatre.	✓	
The owner of the Red Lion is inspirational.		✓
One of the first theatres was called The Theatre.	✓	
Shakespeare is hard to understand.		✓

5. What do you think historians will think about this news?

Accept any reasonable answer that refers to historians finding the news interesting, e.g. I think that historians will find this news exciting because this is the discovery of the first purpose-built theatre in London.

6. Summarise the key information in this article in 15 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable answer which summarises the story in 15 words or fewer, e.g. The oldest purpose-built theatre in London has been discovered it dates to about 1567.