Lulu Norman, Amy Sharrocks, Vicky Sweetlove and Jane Trowell from PLATFORM met on 9th December 2008 to dowse the Walbrook River.

The Walbrook is the oldest river in London, and an important site to the Romans: many Roman relics and temples have been found along the lower half of the river, and its path is relatively well tracked for its final route to the Thames. Around Moorgate however, traces of the river become muddied and its path has been unclear. It has been lost since 1500.

We dowsed the river on a freezing but very clear winter evening. The moon shone high in the sky. The river rose unobtrusively down the red-bricked side of Northway House, 257 Upper Street. If you walk 15 feet down Highbury Station Road – it’s there, underneath the barred windows, just where the roof changes height. This Islington Housing Office is the first of many council buildings along the route, offering help and support to those in need.

The trail of this almost humanitarian river joins up libraries and many council buildings, Barnabas House to Wesley’s Chapel, house and Leysian Mission – then runs on through the heart of the financial district and across the Bank of England itself.

And on almost every street corner of the route is a pub, mirroring another flow of liquid, a different kind of succour, and reflecting the reputation of this area as a hothouse for radical thinkers, unions and dissolute behaviour.