

## **Roman Baths Teachers' Pack**

### **Key Stage 1 and 2**

#### **Aim of the teachers' pack**

This pack aims to help teachers plan a lively self-guided educational visit to the Roman Baths. It includes ideas to use in pre-visit, on site, and follow-up activities. Teaching sessions are also available in response to National Curriculum and QCA units. Details can be found on our website (see back page) or by ringing 01225 477785.

The material in this pack is intended to be adaptable for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils, providing a wide range of cross-curricular topics. We suggest that you pick and choose from these activities according to your topic focus, the time you have available and your own students.

#### **Introduction to the Roman Baths**

The Roman Baths is an exciting and very special place to visit. It has a large and outstanding collection of national importance. It consists of the exceptionally well-preserved remains of a complex of buildings surrounding the hot spring at Bath including an enormous Bath House, the courtyard of the Temple of Sulis Minerva and at its heart the hot spring. The collection is drawn from the site and also includes finds from the Roman town of Aquae Sulis (Bath). The site and its collections provide primary evidence about the way of life in Roman Britain and include artefacts demonstrating Roman crafts, trade, religious life, the monetary system and architecture as well as domestic life.

## Pre-visit information

Work on archaeological sites and in museums can develop children's visual awareness, deductive, practical and reasoning skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding of Roman life as required by the National Curriculum.

### What does a museum do?

Museums and archaeological sites enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts which they hold in trust for all of us.

At the Roman Baths children have the chance to use and look closely at original artefacts which give them a unique experience that cannot be replicated in the classroom.

### Using the Roman Baths for a group visit

#### Skills

- **Working in pairs or in groups**

Children will be used to making choices individually then explaining them to the group or class, using key words to talk about objects that they have chosen and seen.

- **Observational skills**

On a visit to the Roman Baths your children will have lots of visual stimulation. They may need help with ways to learn from observation.

For example:

- finding an object previously seen in a photograph
- choosing an object which shows their own preference

#### Knowledge

- **Vocabulary you may encounter**

temple –	religious building
tepid –	warm
spring –	naturally occurring water source
spa –	curative bathing complex
plunge –	jump/step into water

pediment –	large triangle of stones, often decorated, supported on columns at the front of the temple
pillar –	stone upright to support a structure, such as a pediment or roof
column –	round pillar often used to support a structure or roof
mineral –	natural substance (here found dissolved in the spring water)
mosaic –	normally a floor decoration, made out of small pieces of stone and tile (tesserae)
sacred –	dedicated to a deity/god
goddess –	a female deity/god
artefact –	an object made by a person
replica –	exact copy
strigil –	a scraper used for cleaning the body
hypocaust –	under floor heating system
pilae –	pillars of flat bricks, stacked one on top of another in the hypocaust system

### **Behaviour and what to expect on a visit**

Some children may never have visited a site like this before and so they need to know a few important facts that will help them to get the most from their visit. It is important to remember that the Roman Baths can become very busy, especially in the summer months. We ask that all teachers are aware of the following:

- there will be other people about, so best behaviour and being reasonably quiet is particularly important
- children must always be accompanied by an adult (1 adult to 8 children is ideal)
- water bottles are permitted but other eating and drinking is not allowed. A lunch space can usually be arranged in advance if required.
- when beside the Great Bath please ensure that children do not touch the water as it is untreated. There are two safe supplies of the spa water drawn direct from the spring available; one is in the West Baths, the other in the Pump Room, both towards the end of your visit.
- children must walk and not run. This is especially important beside the Great Bath where the original Roman paving is uneven and can be slippery when wet

- toilets are located at the beginning and end of the museum. There is a flat access toilet in the centre of the museum.
- Yes, photography is allowed!

## Organising your visit

This part of the pack includes some tips and information to make your visit go smoothly.

### How to book

Please book all visits in advance, including a self-guided trip.

Contact our Group Bookings office on 01225 477785 for details.

### Lunch arrangements

Don't forget the all-important packed lunch. The Parade Gardens near the Roman Baths are open all year where school groups may eat their packed lunches. Indoor facilities are also available from the **Roman Baths** at a small charge per class. Advance booking is essential. Please ask for details when booking your visit. Unfortunately rooms cannot be arranged on the day of the visit. We have storage trolleys for a limited number of bags. Please ask when you arrive.

### Teacher tips

- When visiting the Roman Baths, it would be useful for the children to bring clipboards and pencils.
- It is a good idea to have organised your class into smaller groups with each group's responsible helper identified clearly to your children before arriving.
- We have found that sticky labels detailing the group's number help enormously! In smaller groups children can comfortably see what it is they are studying. Working in smaller groups also means groups can start work in different parts of the museum. Ask staff for help with the quick route to places.
- There is an audioguide available for all to use at no extra charge. We have an audioguide for adults and a special tour for children, which lasts approximately 45 minutes.
- We have two shops at the Roman Baths. A smaller is in the centre of the museum just prior to entering the Great Bath area. The larger is at the exit of the museum. All cater for a wide range of customers. Gifts for children include pens, pencils and site-related souvenirs.
- If you have a teaching session booked and experience an unexpected delay please telephone Roman Baths' reception 01225 477791.

## Your visit

This part of the pack highlights locations around the site. There is information explaining the site throughout its 2000 year history. There are also questions for children. At the end of the pack you will find suggestions for follow-up activities.

## The Terrace



- From the terrace you can look down to the remains of the Roman bath house 6 metres below modern street level.
- Directly below is the Great Bath, it is at the centre of the Roman bathing complex and once had a roof high above where you now stand.
- The terrace and most of the statues were built in the 1890s a few years after the Roman Baths were discovered. If you look carefully you might be able to work out that some of the statues are of Roman emperors.

## Questions for children

**What can you see below?** – A big swimming pool full of green water – it is the Great Bath – it was at the centre of the Roman bath-house and had a barrel-vaulted roof (arched roof).

**What do you think makes the water green?** – The water is colourless but algae live in the water and it takes on this green colour. In Roman times it would have been clear because the roof did not let sunlight into the baths.

**Which is the oldest part you can see?** – The bath area built by the Romans in the first century and then modified throughout the time they used it (1st to early 5th centuries) – the terrace is just over 100 years old. It was built by the City Council following the discovery of the Roman Baths.

## Gorgon's Head



- This was part of the front of the Roman Temple. It is a large triangle of decorated stones called a pediment. At the centre of the pediment is the Gorgon's Head.
- The temple was dedicated to the goddess Sulis Minerva, a combination of the Celtic goddess Sulis and the Roman goddess Minerva. The Gorgon (Medusa) was a monster, which according to legend had the power to turn people to stone simply by looking at them. In legend Perseus slew the Gorgon, Medusa, with the help of the goddess Athena (known as Minerva in Roman mythology). Perseus then presented the head of the Gorgon to the goddess and that is why the gorgon symbol is frequently associated with Minerva.
- The staring face of the Gorgon combines many ideas. Traditionally female, the Gorgon here is male with a moustache, staring eyes and long nose. He is a Celtic Gorgon. This Gorgon may also resemble water gods like Oceanus and Neptune due to the flowing hair and wings. Its sun-like appearance may refer to the heat of the Sacred Spring or be a reference to the Roman sun-god Sol.

### Questions for children

**What can you see?** – A big stone carving.

**The title of the object is 'The Temple Pediment'. What do you think a pediment is?** – It is a special decoration on the front of a temple, just beneath the roof, shaped like a triangle.

**Another name for this object is the 'Gorgon's Head'. What is a Gorgon?** – The Gorgon was a monster which had the power to turn people to stone.

**What do you think the hair of the Gorgon is meant to be?** – Snakes, flames/or waves, and wings.

**If you look carefully you can see an owl and a helmet – why do you think they are there?** - The owl is for wisdom and the helmet for warfare. Minerva was the goddess of both of these.

**What might happen to you if you met the Gorgon?** – Turn to stone!

## Sacred Spring & gifts for the goddess



- Hot water gushes up from the ground as a natural hot spring. The water is 46° C and full of dissolved minerals. You can sometimes see the steam rising from the water.
- Around this spring the Romans built a stone water tank sealed with lead to stop the water seeping away. The water was then directed in two ways: to the baths or through the overflow drain which runs underground to the River Avon.
- The spring was a sacred place that the Romans thought was the work of the Gods. People came here to pray to the goddess Sulis Minerva and to make offerings to her.
- People would write curses telling the goddess about objects which had been stolen from them. The curses were written on sheets of lead, a soft metal. They were then rolled up and thrown into the water. People also threw coins and jewellery into the spring as presents for the goddess so that she would be pleased and look after them and their families.

### Questions for children

**What is a spring?** – It is water gushing up from the ground.

**What can you see happening on the surface of the water?** – It is bubbling and steaming.

**Why do you think the water is bubbling and steaming?** – Gas is escaping from the spring as it comes to the surface – like bubbles in a bottle of lemonade. It is steaming because the water is hot, not because the water is boiling.

**What objects did people throw into the spring?** – Coins, jewellery, curses etc.

**Why did people throw the objects into the spring?** – To please the goddess so she would look after them and their families and to ask the goddess to get back stolen objects and to punish the thief.



## Minerva's Head



- This large bronze head of Sulis Minerva probably came from a full size statue of her standing in the Temple. Ordinary people would not have seen this as they were not allowed to enter the Temple. Only priests (and probably cleaners!) entered the temple.
- This bronze head was discovered in 1727. Covered in gold leaf, it was found by workmen digging a sewer. This is the only part of the statue, which has been found.
- The head would have had a helmet as a sign of her warrior capabilities.
- After the Roman period ended (around 400AD) it is thought that the head was violently broken off from the body and you can see the damage on the neck.

### Questions for children

**What do you think the head is made of?** – Metal

**What kind of metal is it made of?** – Gilt bronze (mixture of copper, lead and tin and covered in gold leaf)

**Would this be cheap or expensive to make?** – Expensive

**Would a skilled or non-skilled person have made the head?** – Skilled

**How would you describe her expression?** – Wise, fierce, peaceful, bored.

**Look carefully at Minerva's Head. Is it a complete statue? What do you think is missing?** – The rest of the body is missing, including a helmet that statues of Minerva usually had.

**Is it likely we will find the missing parts? If not why not?** – It is very unlikely that archaeologists will find the rest of the statue. Finds like Minerva's Head are very rare.



## Mosaics



- You can see two different mosaic floors. The technique of decorating floors (and sometimes walls) using small cubes of coloured stone, tile or glass known as tesserae was originally used in classical Greece.
- One (above) shows a fragment of a much larger floor decorated with a marine scene. A dolphin and two sea beasts are shown.
- The other, in the East Baths caldarium, is very difficult to see but shows a part of a repeating geometric pattern which were popular with mosaic craftsmen and their customers.
- These mosaic floors came from buildings in Aquae Sulis (Roman Bath) and they decorated the finer rooms.

### Questions for children

**What is a mosaic?** – A floor decoration.

**What are the pieces of this mosaic made of?** – Coloured stone and tile

**What shape are most of the pieces of mosaic?** – Square or rectangular

**What colours are on the mosaic?** – Black, grey, pink, brown, white and red.

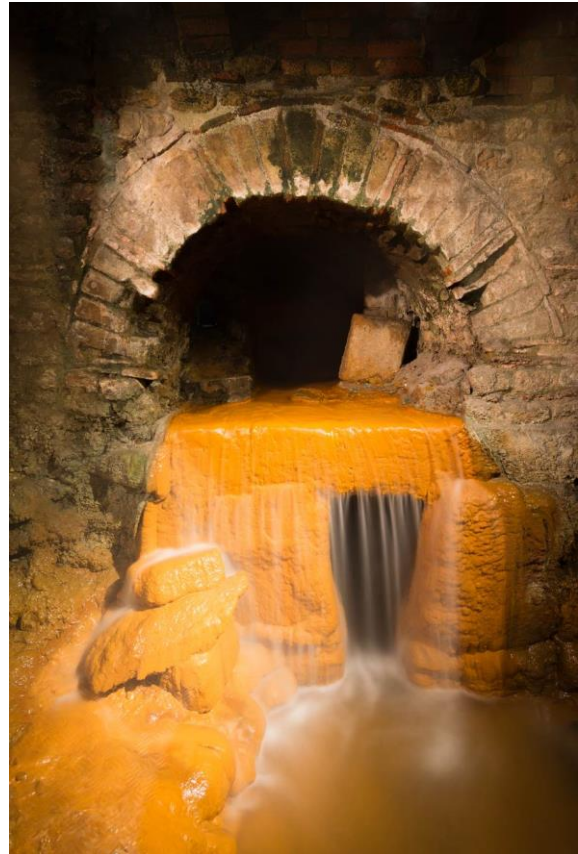
**In a Roman building where would you find a mosaic?** – Usually on the floor in the best rooms.

**What other materials can Roman mosaics be made from, that we don't see here at the Roman Baths?** – Pieces of glass, shells, broken pieces of pottery

**Would you need to be a skilled craftsmen to make mosaics?** – Yes. It was a skilled job which would take a long time to learn and to do well as it is very detailed work. Sometimes mosaics were made in sections in a workshop and then laid in the building.

## Spring overflow & drain

- More than 1.1 million litres of hot spring water gushes up out of the ground every day of the year. It is channelled into the baths and the rest flows away through the overflow and down the great drain.
- In the display case you can see some objects which were found in the drain. The gems would have been set into rings used to seal letters.
- Looking at the drain you can see the water from the Great Bath rejoining the flow.
- The iron in the spring water stains everything orange.



### Questions for children

**Look at the gemstones in the display case and try and work out what pictures are carved into them?** – Horses, heads, people, chariots .....

**How would these gemstones have been used?** – Set into rings and used to seal letters.

**Why do you think the bath complex needed an overflow?** – Over 1 million litres of water gush out of the ground everyday and it has to have somewhere to go. The Great Bath has to be emptied to clean it and when this is taking place the water has to go another way.

**Where do you think all the water goes to when it disappears down the tunnel?** – Down the drain to the River Avon.

## Great Bath



- Most Romans did not take baths at home, but went instead to a public bath-house. At the Roman Baths in Bath there were the same facilities as in a normal town, but there were important additional features as well. These were the large hot and tepid pools for swimming, a curative immersion bath and a laconicum (hot and dry sauna)
- The Great Bath is the largest bath and it was used as a swimming pool and leisure area to relax, meet and chat with friends, play games and bathe in the warm water.
- The Great Bath is 1.5m deep, 19m long and 9 m wide. The bottom of the Great Bath is lined with 45 sheets of lead waterproofing.
- In one corner you can see the water flowing in from the spring and in the other corner the water flowing out of the Great Bath and into the drain.
- The water has come up from the Spring and into the Great Bath. It is still hot water, about 35° C, and would be pleasant to bathe in.

### Questions for children

**This building you see today was built in Roman times and added to in Victorian times. Which parts do you think are Roman and which Victorian?** – The lower part, up to a height of about 1.6m, is Roman. The upper part is Victorian and was built on top of the Roman remains.

**Imagine you could put the clock back to Roman times. What could you see happening here?** – People bathing, chatting, playing games with friends, eating snacks and drinking, generally relaxing. People also came to bathe in the hot water after cleansing elsewhere in the bath-house or were seeking a cure. The Great Bath was more than just a swimming pool.

**How is the water heated?** – The spring water is naturally hot.

## East Baths



- This part of the site was complex and changed over time. It included changing rooms, a hot room which could be steamy and may have included a hot tub, warm rooms and warm plunge pools where bathers would seek cures for their ailments.
- Men, women and older children visited the baths. Mixed bathing may have taken place, although laws were passed to forbid it by Emperor Hadrian (117-138AD), and again by later emperors. The opposite ends of the baths were probably used separately by men and women. Alternatively, the baths were probably open at different times for men and women.
- Soap was not used; instead the aim was to clean the skin by sweating. Perfumed olive oil was first rubbed onto the skin then scraped off using a strigil (scraper).
- Bathers would get undressed and leave their clothes in an **apodyterium** (changing room). They would move into a **tepidarium** (warm room) to relax, have a massage and slaves would rub scented oils into their skin. They then moved into a **caldarium** (hot room) and would sweat. The oil and sweat would release dirt from their skin, which would be scraped away with a **strigil**. They could then rinse off the last dirt and oil in a plunge pool of warm water before moving to a **frigidarium** (cold room) for a refreshing cold plunge. At the end they could go out to the **Great Bath** to relax.
- Walls have been constructed and painted as we think they may have looked like in Roman times. We have painted wall plaster as evidence.

### Questions for children

**How did people get clean in Roman times?** – They used olive oil instead of soap. They moved through heated rooms to sweat out the dirt and then they would scrape it off using a strigil (scraper). They finished this off with a plunge in a cold water bath.

**What happened in these rooms?** Apodyterium, Tepidarium, Caldarium, Frigidarium. **Hint - look at the displays to help you.**

**The Roman bath-house was probably quite dark like the East Baths is now. Why?** – Small windows, oil lamps, no electricity etc.



## Sacred Spring and King's Bath



- You might have already seen the Sacred Spring from the other side in the museum.
- Only parts of the lower walls of the Roman Sacred Spring building remain. No Romans ever swam here, this belonged to the goddess Sulis Minerva.
- What you see today is The King's Bath, started over eight hundred years ago, in Norman times, to surround the Spring, and used by the monks of Bath Abbey to provide a bath for healing the sick.
- People sat in the niches around the bath up to their neck in the healing water.
- In the seventeenth century, the rings around the bath were donated by visitors who benefited from bathing in the King's Bath. This meant that bathers who followed could use them to hold onto while bathing.
- The Pump Room was built in the eighteenth century, when Bath became a fashionable resort. You can see the fountain to which the spring water is pumped for people to drink.

### Questions for children

**Why did the Romans come to the Sacred Spring?** – To worship, and make offerings to, the goddess Sulis Minerva.

**Did the Romans bathe in the Sacred Spring?** – No. **Why not?** - It belonged to the goddess.

**Around 800 years ago people started to bathe again in the hot water and built a bath here. Why?** – They thought bathing in the hot water was good for them and would cure them of their illness or disability.

## The West Baths and interactive display



- In the western range of baths you can see a **hypocaust** system. This was the way the Romans centrally heated certain rooms in their buildings. This system was used in public bath houses and also in some rooms in the houses of the wealthy.
- Celtic homes ('round' houses) were timber-framed buildings with wattle and daub walls and thatched roofs. They had a central fire to provide warmth and cooking facilities. They did not use the hypocaust system.
- The floors of the heated rooms were held up by piles of flat bricks called **pilae**. In the next room was a furnace where charcoal and wood were burnt. The hot air from the furnace passed into the space under the floor. Hollow ducts, like miniature chimneys, drew the hot air up the walls.
- You can also see two **frigidaria** (cold rooms or pools). One is a large circular plunge pool and the other a smaller rectangular plunge pool at the end of your visit.

### Questions for children

**How did the Romans heat their rooms?** – Hypocaust system of underfloor heating.

**How did the hypocaust system work?** – The hot air from a nearby furnace passed in the space beneath the floor and through ducts in the walls.

**Do you think a Celtic or a Roman house would be more comfortable to live in?**  
– Depends on your point of view.

**Look at the big circular pool and tell me the Latin name of it (we talked about it when we were looking at the rooms at the other end of the Great Bath)?**  
– Frigidarium – cold pool.

## The spa water fountain



You might like to try the spa water from the fountain. The water contains 43 minerals. There is a display listing some of them.

### Questions for children

**Do you like the taste of the water?** Certainly, some people dislike the water but most find it an acquired taste!

**Does it remind you of anything?** Many people say as a result of the iron in the water that it reminds them of blood. Charles Dickens said it tasted of warm flat-irons!

**Why is the water hot?** It fell as rain that sank deep into the earth. It was heated by the Earth and then pushed up through a crack in the rock as steam and hot water.



## **Follow-up activities**

Here are some ideas and suggestions for activities and classroom-based work that you might like to try in follow-up sessions.

### **Escape from the Gorgon's Head Snakes and Ladders**

Use the image of the Gorgon's Head. You could start at the Gorgon's mouth, continue down one side of his moustache and make a route that follows the line of his hair. When you reach the edge of the card you have escaped the Gorgon and are in no danger of being turned into stone! To complete the game you could use Roman numerals to number the squares and make counters representing Romans.

### **Read the myth of Perseus and Medusa.**

Then design a storyboard inspired by it.

### **Make a gorgon's head in salt dough, clay or papier mâché – 3D**

### **Make a gorgon mask using stiff paper/card – 2D**

You could add lots of snakey hair with shredded paper.

### **Write a piece of instructional text on how to use each room in the bathing complex.** This could be covered in Literacy Hour.

### **Make coins for the goddess**

Research Roman Coins. Find out the names of the coins and what appears on the two sides of the coins. Then you can make your own coins using card or modelling clay.

### **Make a mosaic**

Using coloured pencils on squared paper/ using coloured pieces of paper on squared paper. Mosaics are a good focus for work on tessellation. Roman mosaics were often based on square grids. Or make a more complex mosaic with a scene in the middle and a decorative border. This could be for individual, small group or whole class work.

### **Make a junk model of the Great Bath**

Use any appropriate materials you can find. Try putting the vaulted roof on!

### **If you have measured the Great Bath using strides convert your measurements back at school.**

**Solinus in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD wrote "In Britain are hot springs adorned with sumptuous splendour for the use of mortals. Minerva is patron goddess of these....."**

Be inspired like Solinus and write a tourist brochure about the baths and the spring.

## Useful information

### General publications

**The Essential Roman Baths** – Stephen Bird – Scala Publishers Ltd

**Roman Bath Discovered** – Barry Cunliffe – The History Press

### Key Stage 1

**Romans:** Usborne Beginners

**Greeks built temples and other questions** – Scholastic I wonder why series

**Romans wore togas and other questions** – Scholastic I wonder why series

### Key Stage 2

**A Visitor's Guide to Ancient Rome** – Usborne Time Travellers Series by Lesley Sims – Usborne

**Who were the Romans?** – Usborne Starting Points History – Phil Roxbee Cox – Usborne

**The Romans Activity Book** – Ralph Jackson, Simon James, Emma Myer – The British Museum.

**The Myths of Greece and Rome** – H.A. Guerber – Dover

**The Rotten Romans** – Terry Deary, Horrible Histories

**The Ruthless Romans** – Terry Deary, Horrible Histories

**Ancient Rome** – Scholastic eyewitness history

**Roman Myths** – Geraldine McCaughrean, Orchard

**The Roman Mysteries** and **The Roman Quests** – Caroline Lawrence, Orion

### Websites

[www.romanbaths.co.uk](http://www.romanbaths.co.uk) - the website of the Roman Baths. See our children pages and our story pages.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqtf34j> - BBC Bitesize.

<https://resourcesforhistory.com/> – site with links to history website for children (Celts & Romans).

[www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/romanpages.html](http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/romanpages.html) Hoards of unusual and original information backed up by good clear facts.

<http://www.show.me.uk/section/history> - 24 hour museum website for children with lots of history topics and games for children.