The Roman Baths through the eyes of a historian - trail

Chronology

* AD43
* 19th
* Claudius
* 10,000

Change and Continuity

* Changes 1st to 4th Century might include addition of Temple Courtyard, addition of sacrificial altar, addition of Tholos, addition of exercise yard, addition of arched roof and extra bathing facilities to east and west.
* Continuities 1st to 4th Century might include Great Bath, Sacred Spring and Temple.
* Changes 4th Century to now might include the loss of the roof, the loss of the paintwork, the building of the Terrace and the statues of Roman emperors.
* Continuities 4th Century to now might include Great Bath, same direction of flow, original lead pipes and sweat rooms to east and west.
* Bath Gorgon different from Greek Gorgons because male, friendly, hairs of waves and sunbeams as well as snakes.
* The Bath Gorgon is an attempt to make the Gorgon more Celtic and more suitable for Baths in that like Neptune.

Using Evidence

* Evidence of wealth = cavities in teeth due to honey in diet.
* Evidence of age = attrition of bones.
* Evidence that Syrian = DNA + oxygen isotope analysis of teeth.
* Archaeologists cannot explain why he came to Bath.

Significance

* The Romans had religious imagery everywhere, they worshipped deities in the home and public holidays were religious festivals.
* Curse tablets are significant for many reasons, including first examples of prayers, insight into everyday life, only example of vernacular Latin and largest collection of curse tablets in Britain.
* The Celtic tablet is the manager’s favourite because it is a mystery; it cannot be deciphered.

Interpretation

* There is evidence of the temple steps, the sacrificial altar, the monumental porch, the Gorgon’s head, the paving, the painting of the stonework and the donation of a statue by Lucius Marcius Memor (the haruspex).
* Guesses include the colours on the stonework, the heights of buildings, the characters and what Memor’s statue looked like.
* Stephen Clews appeals to his audience by emphasising how exciting the discovery of Minerva’s head would have been in 1727. He describes how it would probably have looked in Roman times.
* Michael Rosen excites children by having the priest character talking about keeping the Temple flames burning and reciting a prayer. He is imaginative.
* Bill Bryson entertains by joking about how ugly Minerva is. He says that the male statues normally look like someone he would like to have a pint with.

Written Communication

* Balneum = deep immersion pool
* Caldarium = hot room
* Tepidarium = warm room
* Apodyterium = changing room
* Natatio = large cool swimming bath
* Frigidarium = cold plunge bath