History Around Us – Teacher Crib Sheet

Late 19th Century – The Terrace

* The Terrace is clearly a later addition to the Roman Baths because it is in better condition to the buildings below, there is glass in the windows and the new/old join can clearly be seen on the pillars around the Great Bath.
* Possible describing words for the pictures on the screens: *mess, ladders, mud, rubble.*
* The Victorians commissioned these statues to add an extra Roman touch. The statues are all of emperors connected with Britain e.g. Julius Caesar (made initial attempt to conquer Britain), Claudius (successfully conquered Britain) and Hadrian (built the famous wall).
* The Terrace suggests that the Victorians were keen to put their own stamp on the Baths. They were not obsessed with authenticity in the way that some modern heritage organisations are.

43AD – Meet the Romans

* The Romans built the Baths here because it had been a sacred site for thousands of years because of the Hot Spring.
* Numerous inferences can be made about everyday life in Roman Britain from the wooden model e.g. the Romans enjoyed shopping at markets, they enjoyed sports such as wrestling and religion formed a major part of their lives.
* The Gorgon’s Head is a blend of Celtic and Roman because it does not have the traditional features associated with the Gorgon e.g. it is not female, it does not look fierce and it does not just have snakes in its hair.

18th Century – Life and Death in Aquae Sulis

* The man who discovered the large stone head of a lady probably took it home because he realised it was historically significant. He would not have really known what to do with it because there were no museums for it to go to at that time.

1960s – Worshipping the Gods and the Temple Precinct

* The lead curses are important because of the sheer number of them (130), they are the first prayers and they show how Latin was spoken on an everyday basis.
* The curse tablets reveal that human nature has not really changed; people in Roman times could be vindictive and they valued personal possessions.
* The Roman floor level is so far below the modern floor level because of the rubble that accumulated when the Roman Baths fell into disrepair. A parallel could be drawn here with the Rows at Chester.
* The cornerstone of the sacrificial altar was clearly not valued in medieval times; they just saw it as a useful piece of building stone.

18th Century – The Temple Precinct and Hot Spring

* In Roman times, the statue of Minerva would have been full-length and wearing a Corinthian helmet.
* There was much excitement when Minerva’s head was discovered at the height of the social season. Bath would have been packed with people. Classical times were very much in fashion in the 18th Century. Indeed, John Wood was a great Classicist and he was organising the rebuilding of Bath in this style.
* Similarities with the cartoon include the statue of King Bladud and the presence of steam in the winter. Differences from the cartoon include the lower water level now and the fact that there are never any bathers in the Hot Spring.

5th Century – Coins and Roman Baths

* The newest of the Roman coins found in the Hot Spring is from the time of Theodosius (379-395AD).
* There is evidence that the floors of both the Caldarium and the Natatio have been raised.
* The Roman pillars may have collapsed due to either neglect or being deliberately pulled down. There is other evidence of deliberate destruction at the Roman Baths e.g. the severing of Minerva’s head.

All Periods – Hot Spring

* The Romans originally found marshy ground on this site.
* The Spring is now at the Roman water level.
* The two stone slabs were the bases for statues in Roman times.
* Medieval kings and monks bathed in the Spring.
* The rings date from the 1600s.
* The Pump Room can be seen through the cupula.
* The Georgians liked to drink the water before breakfast.