Big Ideas – Teacher Crib Sheet

1. Visiting the Great Bath would have kept you fit and healthy through swimming, keeping clean and socialising. The warm water would also have soothed aching limbs.
2. The Hot Spring is not a gift from the Goddess. Rather, it is the result of the Penny Quick Fault below Bath enabling 10,000-year-old water to seep up to the earth’s surface. The water is warm because it has been heated up deep inside the earth’s crust.
3. Amongst the people who visited the Baths were stonemasons, aristocrats, slaves who stoked the fires and a priest.
4. The flashing blue light on the perspex model indicates the flow of water. The Romans designed the Great Bath so that it would be filled with fresh water from the Hot Spring in the NW corner and the used water would be drained away from the NE corner.
5. Natural activities featured on the 4th Century model include wrestling and swimming.
6. Supernatural activities featured on the 4th Century model include taking part in a religious procession.
7. The Romans were governing a huge empire from the city of Rome. Health was important to the Roman government for various reasons. Firstly, the army needed to be kept fit and healthy to put down any rebellions and to conquer new lands. Secondly, the healthier the population was, the more resources they could produce. Thirdly, the healthier the population was, the less likely they would be to rebel. Interestingly, the Baths seem to have been built as a direct response to Boudica’s rebellion in AD60.
8. The items to do with personal hygiene are nail cleaners, tweezers, combs and ear scoops.
9. Patients at the special temple building would have to tell the priest what dreams or visions they had in the night. The priest would make a diagnosis by interpreting these.
10. The haruspex was a soothsayer who used the entrails of sacrificial animals to read the future. Bronze models of the goat livers were made to compare blemishes on the real organs – blemishes in a particular place meant a particular omen. This shows the Romans had a good understanding of anatomy (natural medicine) but used this knowledge in supernatural ways.
11. The obvious suggestion here would be breast cancer.
12. The small paterae indicate that poor people were making offerings to the Goddess. The jewellery indicates the presence of women. The ink pots indicate the presence of scholars. The priest’s head-dress unsurprisingly suggests the presence of a priest.
13. The Caldarium kept people clean and healthy by making them sweat. The Tepidarium was the place where people had a massage and dead skin was scraped off with a strigil. The Natatio was where people could swim.
14. The Frigidarium in the West Baths was so cold that it would close people’s pores.
15. In the Middle Ages, people would bathe in the Hot Spring (known at that time as the King’s Bath). In Georgian times, people would bathe in the King’s Bath and drink the spa water before breakfast.
16. This tour is envisaged as an introduction to all the Medicine Through Time syllabi. The intention is to whet the appetite of students to find out more about either natural or supernatural medicine, germ theory or public health. The Black Death of 1348 throws up numerous examples of natural and supernatural medicine. The discovery of germs in 1861 is the key turning point in any Medicine Through Time course. As with germ theory, public health also serves to show how ahead of their time the Romans were as students will not revisit this subject properly until the 1848 and 1875 Public Health Acts.