



Wall Roman Site

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



English Heritage Photo Library

Underfloor heating revealed in the bath-house

a breakdown in relations between the British tribe, the Iceni, and the Roman governor.

Gradually, buildings at Wall began to spread down the hill and a town developed covering an 8 to 12 hectare area. As was common with most Roman towns, Wall was surrounded by a wall and ditch defence system. By the middle of the second century, the army had moved to occupy Wales and northern Britain and this site became a thriving civilian staging post serving the numerous travellers using Watling Street. Early wattle and daub buildings were rebuilt and enlarged in stone. The town attracted trade from local Britons as it offered a ready market for farm produce such as vegetables, fruit, poultry and dairy produce. In return, the Britons could buy imported pottery, metal, ornaments, glassware, wine and oil.

Besides the baths, the mansio

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Wall was a staging post for Roman imperial messengers using Watling Street, the main route connecting London to Wroxeter and Chester. It had a mansio, or hostel, where a night's lodging and change of horse could be obtained. Situated six kilometres west of the junction of Watling Street and the Rykneild Way, all that remains of the site today are the foundations of the mansio and a bath-house. The Romans knew Wall as Lectocetum, although in the Antonine Itinerary, a third century road book, it is recorded as Etocetum. It is

thought that Lectocetum is a Romanised version of a Celtic name meaning grey wood - *leito* meaning grey and *caito* meaning wood.

During the Roman conquest of Britain in the first century, Watling Street was one of the main lines of advance. Forts and campaign camps were built along the road to provide support for the advancing army. Several small forts were established at Wall and were probably situated on the hill where the church stands today. One such fort may have supported the XIVth Legion at Wroxeter during the rebellion led by Boudica following

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and the market, the citizens of Wall probably had a place of worship. During an excavation of the mansio several stones were found which appear to be Celtic in style. One of these, now in the museum, shows two confronting human heads which appear to be horned. A carving to the left of the heads could be a shield. These stones were found, set upside down in the east foundation wall of the mansio which had been rebuilt after a first century fire. A large well in the courtyard of the mansio, which had been filled in during this time, was also found. Both these developments suggest the abandonment of a Romano-Celtic cult site in the mansio area in favour of another, perhaps where the present church now stands. There may have been a temple at Wall dedicated to the goddess Minerva although much of this is speculation. Christianity seems to have been established in Wall in the late Roman period.

Wall's function as a civilian town is emphasised by the finding of burials, cremations at first and later inhumations, strung out along both sides of Watling Street. Some of the remains of the cremations can be seen in the site museum.

In the fourth century, sensing a weakness in Roman rule, the Picts and Scots launched a combined attack on Roman Britain - it was known as the Barbarian Conspiracy. As a consequence many towns including Wall strengthened their defences against threatened raids.

Although the late fourth and early fifth century history of Wall is obscure, it is likely that the town survived the passing of Roman rule. It may be possible that the church took over its administration in light of the importance of nearby Lichfield as an early Anglo-Saxon bishopric. Much of the masonry was robbed in later centuries.

Today the visible remains at Wall consist of the bath-house and



Aerial photograph of Wall



Artist's impression showing the bath-house in the forefront and the mansio beyond

mansio situated in the field, called the Butts, and are under the care of English Heritage.

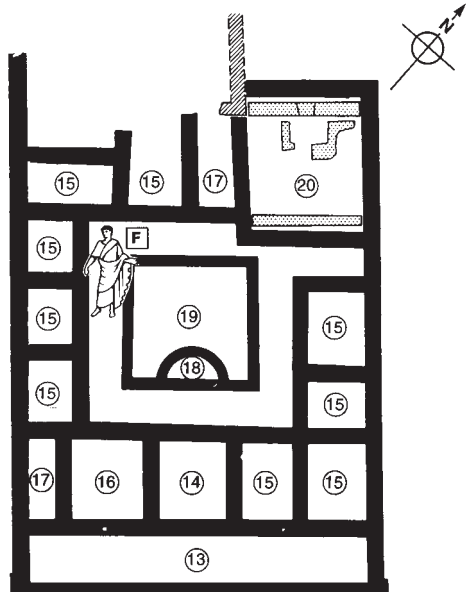
DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

Mansio

A mansio was a hostel where members of the imperial courier service and travellers could rest and obtain a change of horse. A typical mansio such as that at Wall, consisted of a series of rooms grouped around an open courtyard. Among these rooms were a kitchen, well, latrine and sleeping apartments. Three phases of building and some evidence of an upper storey have

been found at Wall. Nothing remains of the two early phases which were of timber but in the early second century the mansio was rebuilt in stone and the foundations of the building remain today.

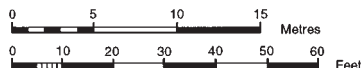
The front of the mansio was roofed and colonnaded. The open courtyard was reached through a central entrance hall, flanked on either side by a series of rooms. The room on the left of the entrance hall may have been a washroom, as suggested by a drain leading to a soakaway in the courtyard. A colonnade surrounded the courtyard, in the centre of which was a semi-circular structure which



- 13 Colonnade
- 14 Entrance Hall
- 15 Room
- 16 Washroom
- 17 Staircase
- 18 Statue
- 19 Courtyard
- 20 Dining Room



- Phase I
- Phase II
- Phase III



Plan of the mansio

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a series of rooms of different temperatures in order to work up a sweat. First, they entered the frigidarium or cold room, then into a warm room or tepidarium finally moving into the caldarium or hot steamy room, like a Turkish bath. They were massaged with olive oil and at various stages the oil and sweat were scraped away by slaves with a curved metal strigil. Plunges into hot and cold water followed, and then the bathers, clean, relaxed and refreshed, would return to the exercise yard.

Five phases of construction have been identified at Wall. The earliest building on this site was

A latrine might have been located in this area.

The water supply for the baths probably came from a spring in the hillside, and was brought to the bath suite by an aqueduct, the remains of which can be seen as a foundation on the north side of the exercise yard. Drains in the complex led away to the stream at the bottom of the hill.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

Since the remains at Wall survive only at foundation level, it requires an imaginative approach to recreate the structures of the bath-house and mansio. A visit to the site is best made towards the end of a project on the Romans.

Pupils will get more out of the visit if they know about the Roman Empire, the chronology of events relating to the coming of the Romans to Britain and their impact on the local British population. A large wall map of the

may have been the base for a statue. A further series of rooms were reached through the colonnade. The larger room in the north corner may have had a hypocaust heating system. It seems likely that it would be a comfortable room where travellers or government officials would meet and perhaps eat.

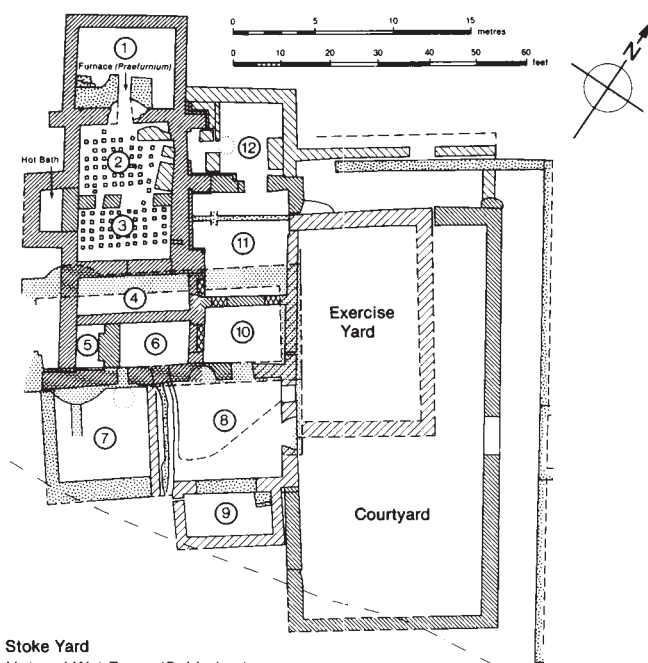
A cobbled street ran between the bath-house and mansio. Merchants would have set up market stalls to trade with locals and travellers.

Bath-house

The Roman system of bathing was an elaborate social affair. At Wall it is likely that the bath suite was used not only by imperial couriers and the military stopping at the mansio, but also by the local townspeople. The bathers, usually women in the morning, men in the afternoon, changed in the apodyterium or changing room and entered the exercise yard where games and warming-up exercises took place to open up the pores of the skin. They proceeded through

never finished and was replaced in the second century by the small range of buildings (1 to 7 as shown on the detailed plan opposite) on the south west side of the complex. Rooms (8) and (9) were added in the third century, and as the prosperity of Wall increased, a hot, dry room or laconicum (10) and furnace (11) were added. At about the same time the exercise yard was extended to include a big enclosed courtyard which had an elegant colonnaded entrance to the north east.

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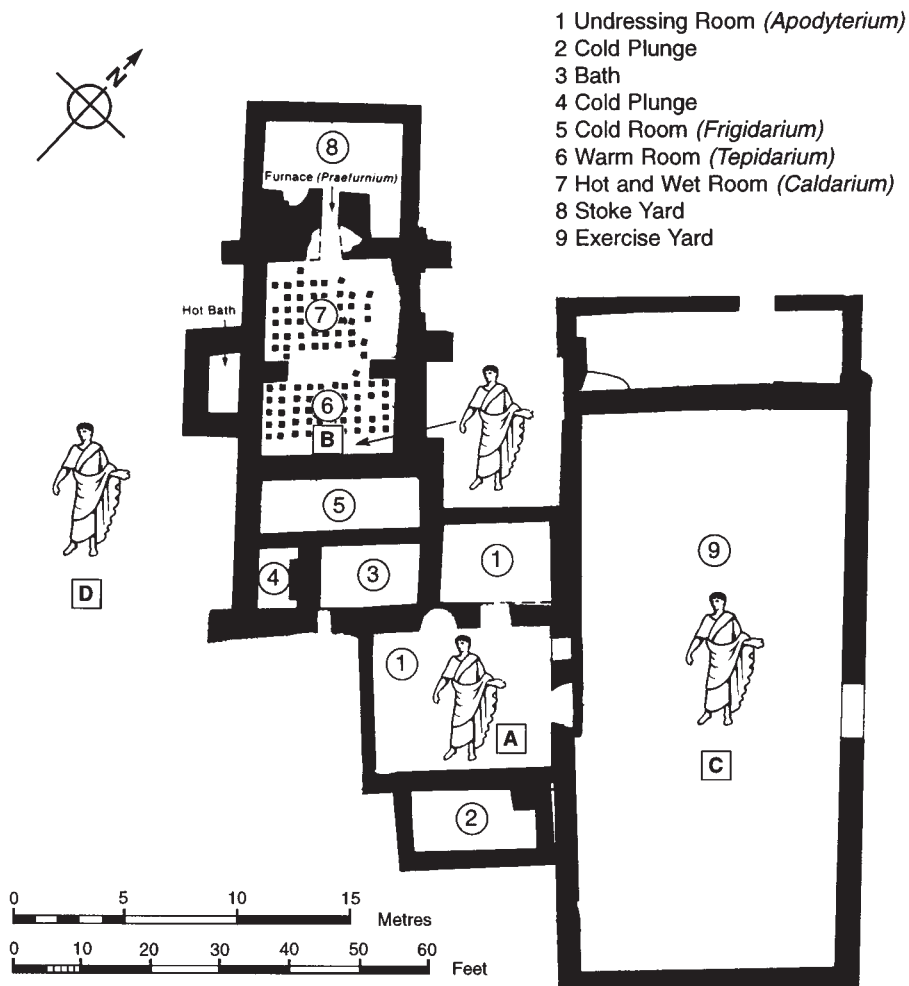


- 1 Stoke Yard
- 2 Hot and Wet Room (*Caldarium*)
- 3 Warm Room (*Tepidarium*)
- 4 Cold Room (*Frigidarium*)
- 5 Cold Bath
- 6 Bath
- 7 Stoke Yard
- 8 Undressing Room (*Apodyterium*)
- 9 Cold Plunge
- 10 Undressing Room (*Apodyterium*) at Third Phase
- 11 Hot Dry Room (*Laconicum*)
- 12 Former Stoke Yard and Furnace

- First Phase
- Second Phase
- Third Phase
- Fourth Phase
- Fifth Phase
- Sixth Phase
- Seventh Phase

Detailed plan of the bath-house

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Simplified plan of the bath-house

Roman Empire which pinpoints the site at Wall would help to stress the fact that Britain was the furthestmost western outpost of the Roman Empire. While visiting the museum, pupils will need a focus to ensure that the time they spend there is meaningful and encourages them to observe and record information about the objects on display.

History

The following activity will allow pupils to gain an understanding of the function of the buildings on site, what the rooms could have looked like and what may have taken place in them. As the bath-house is difficult to interpret, it is recommended that pupils concentrate on those rooms shown on the simplified plan.

In six groups, assign pupils to one of the areas indicated on the

plan by the Roman figure (A to E) in either the bath-house or the mansio. Each group will need the plan of their building (those studying the bath-house will need the simplified plan), copies of the relevant black and white line drawings and appropriate recording equipment for them to record their

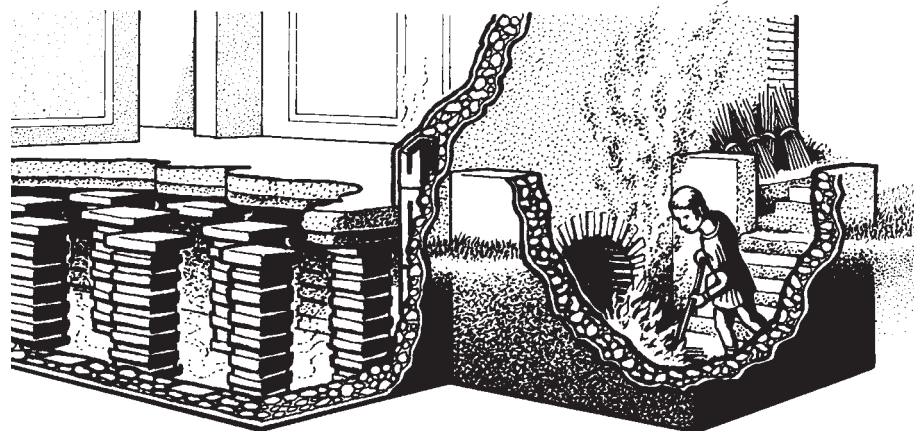


Diagram of hypocaust heating system with pilae

findings.

Using the pictures, ask each group to describe what they think went on in each area; what they would be able to see and what they could hear. Encourage them to also use the artist's impressions on the on-site explanatory panels. They could collect words relating to the sounds they may have heard, for example from the street traders; sound of water splashing; bare feet walking on hard floors; messengers arriving on horseback; birdsong and conversation. Allow each group to visit the museum one at a time. The objects in the museum will provide them with additional information to complete the activity, for instance on heating, wall decoration and storage vessels used by traders.

Physical clues in the bath-house include those associated with the hypocaust heating system. The brick flue that leads from the stoke yard (1) to the caldarium or hot room (2) took the hot air from the furnace to heat the adjacent room. Two box-flue tiles through which the warm air circulated can be seen in the wall of the tepidarium or warm room (3). The pilae or stack of tiles used to support the floor of a heated room have been backfilled to protect them. Explain this to pupils to enable them to understand what lies beneath the grassed mound. The top of one of the pilae can be seen

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by the north east wall below the box-flue tiles. A clue to the interior decoration is the pink-coloured wall plaster in the alcove in the apodyterium or changing room (8).

Back at school, each group can be encouraged to share their findings in different ways, for example they could write snatches of the conversation or improvise background noises they might have heard in their area of the site.

Pupils could explore interpretations of history by using the black and white line drawings and the images on the on-site explanatory panels. Pupils could be asked to take part in a game that requires them to find the artist's impression that relates to the black and white drawing they have been given. What has been added to the image on the panel? How much more information is there? Pupils can start to understand that artist's impressions although based on the best available information at the time, are still one individual's interpretation of a site.

English

Language for different purposes can be explored either as follow up work to the history activity or as separate activities. Pupils can devise an advertisement for the mansio to attract new travellers. Ask them to list all the words that would describe a modern motel and what it has to offer, for example a comfortable bed with ensuite bathroom and a car park. Now ask them to list what would be the equivalent attractions for a Roman motel, a mansio. Using this information and the on-site explanatory panels, pupils can now devise their advertisement.

They could devise an audio trail for younger children describing what the buildings are, what they looked like and how they were used. Pupils could be cast in the role of a traveller fleeing from Wall during the fire that destroyed the

Roman wall painting with border and swag

mansio. They might be a soldier, a messenger or a trader. They are asked to take one object (from the museum) with them. They should give two reasons why they have chosen that object.

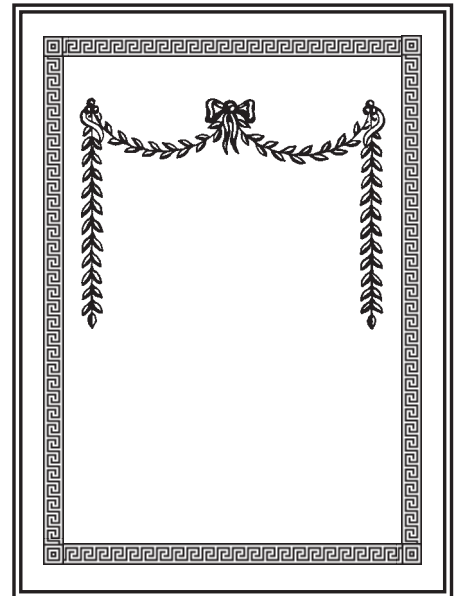
Maths

Pupils can take the role of engineers who have been employed to survey the bath-house at Wall. They need to produce a plan of the site showing the layout. On the plan they must indicate where the services such as water and fuel may have come from. Remember the origin of the place name Llectocetum when considering where the wood might have come from. You will need to decide how you want the pupils to measure the site. Pupils could use paces, the Roman unit of measurement.

<p>Pes (foot) 29.6cm Digitus (finger) 4.7cm Uncia (inch) or Pollex (thumb) 1.85cm Palmus (palm) 7.4cm Cubitum (elbow) 44.4cm Passus (pace) 1.48m Stadium - 125 paces Mille passus - 1000 paces (Roman Mile) 1480m</p>

Art

Roman bath-houses sometimes had geometric patterned floors and painted plastered walls. Pupils can design their own decoration for one of the rooms in the bath-house. The walls would have been divided a third of the way up by a line, under which would have been one colour or a series of coloured panels. Above these were probably images of architectural forms like columns, pediments or swags of fruit and flowers. Pupils can view some of the examples of painted wall plaster in the museum and use the colour illustrations on the interpretation panels.



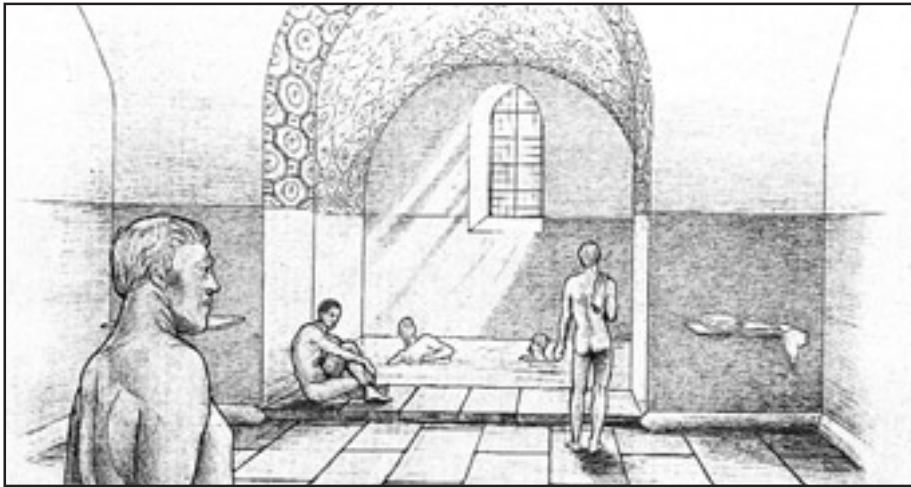
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Science

In the museum, pupils could investigate and record different types of materials used by the Romans. They can list the materials describing their colour and texture, what each material was used for - domestic use, building material, personal use or for manufacturing - and why they think that material was used for that purpose. They can also compare the materials used at Wall with their modern equivalent.

Geography

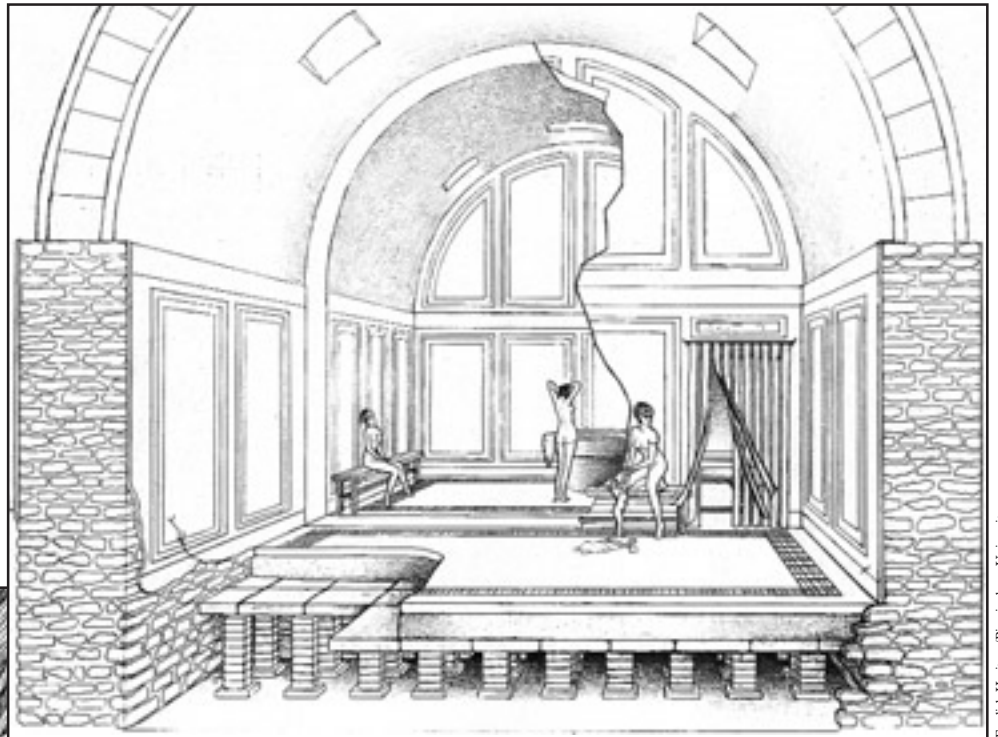
The bath-house and mansio lie on the lower, eastward slope of a hill at the bottom of which runs a small stream. The series of forts which were built at Wall during the Roman period were sited on the crown of the hill where the parish church now stands. If time allows, it would be useful to take the pupils to the churchyard which commands a very good view of the surrounding landscape. They can be asked to identify on a plan, the position of the Roman town and the line of Watling Street which runs through the present-day village of Wall. They can be asked to think why the town grew up at this location. Consider water supply, defence and the route of the Roman road.



A *Apodyterium and cold plunge*

English Heritage/Birmingham University

B *Calderium and Tepidarium*



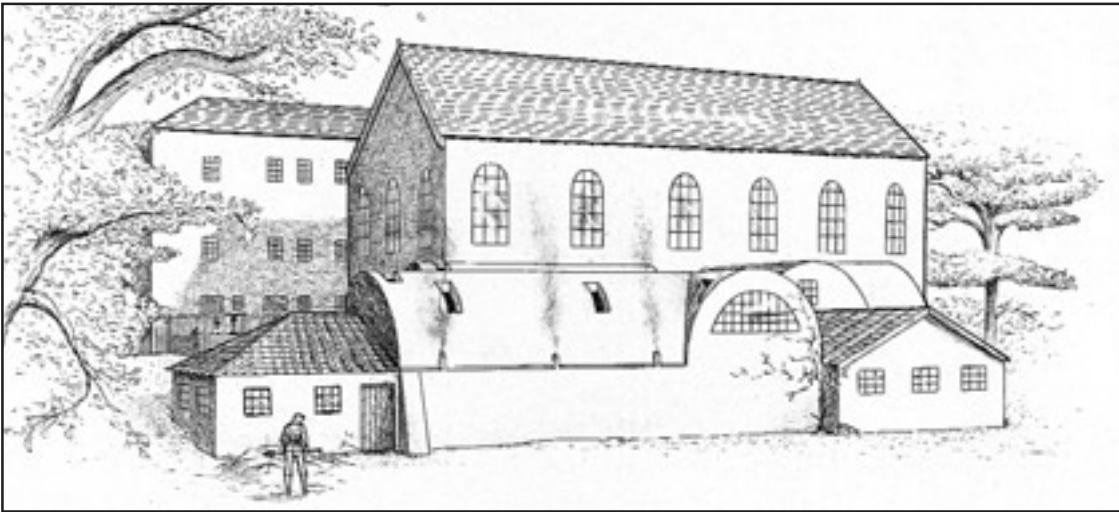
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C *Exercise yard*

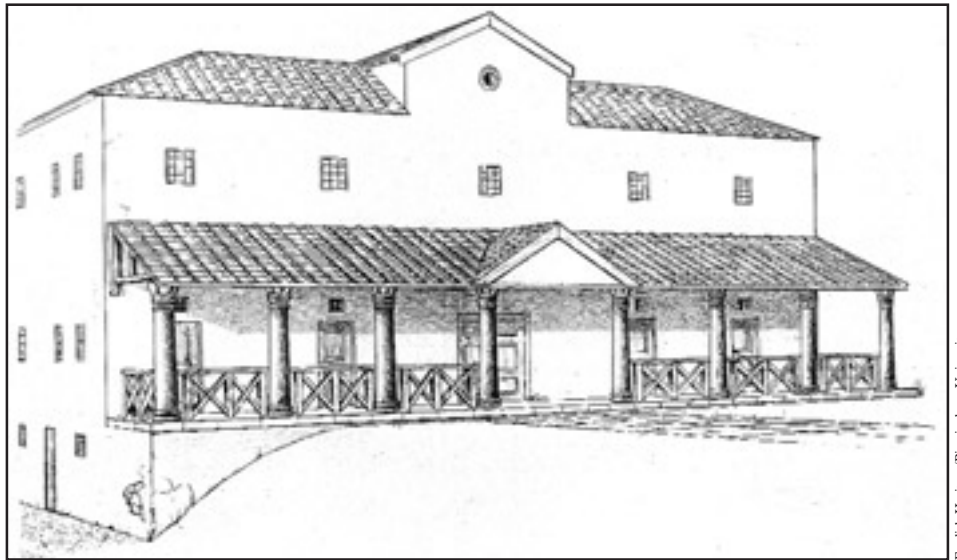
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D
The bath-house



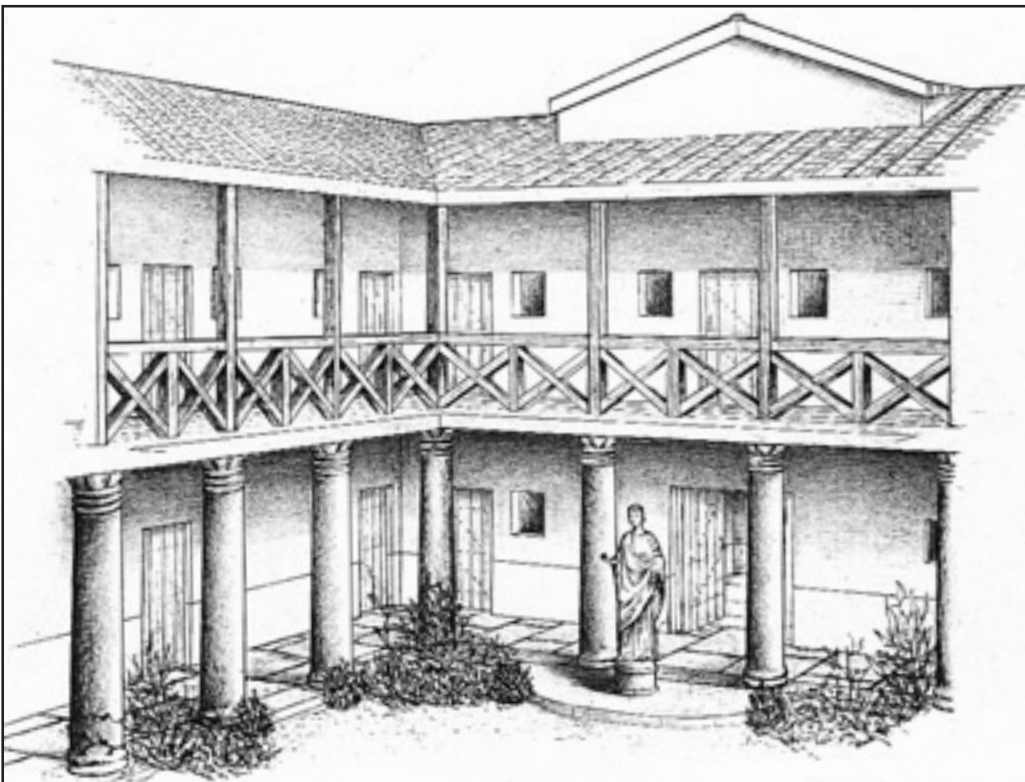
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E
Front of the mansio



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F
Inner courtyard of the mansio



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MAKING A VISIT

Opening hours

1st April-1st November: daily from 10am-6pm, but closing for lunch between 1pm-2pm

Open 10am-dusk in October.

Booking procedure

By application form available from Education Bookings, English Heritage, Hazelrigg House, 33 Marefair, Northampton, NN1 1SR. Tel: 01604 730325.

Educational visits are free, but must be booked at least 14 days in advance via the regional booking office. Maximum party number is 100, with a adult to student ratio of at least 1 to 15. It is essential that you make a preparatory visit to plan your work. This is free and you will be sent a free entry permit when your booking is confirmed.

How to get there

Wall lies just off the A5 in the present day village of the same name, just south of Lichfield, Staffordshire.

OS map 139 ref SK099067

Contacts

Site Custodian: Wall Roman Site, Wall, nr Lichfield.

Tel: 01543 480768.

Education Officer: Tel: 01604 730351.

Facilities

Parking: there is a small free car park. The site is a short walk up the main road on the left. The main road is very narrow at this point and pupils would have to walk in single file. Great care must be taken.

Toilets: in the museum.

Site museum: is situated in a cottage on the main road just before the site. It contains finds from the site.

Access: steps lead up to the site, making wheelchair access difficult, but the site itself is grassed over and fairly flat. There is a grassed but very rough track which gives access to the top of the site. Please

telephone the custodian before you visit.

Wheelchair access to the museum is possible.

Shop: the site hut has a small shop where an audio tour may be hired. These are not available for school parties but might be useful for planning purposes.

Nearby and related sites

Wroxeter Roman City, Shropshire. This is the remains of the Roman city of Viroconium and has upstanding masonry, and a bath complex. The link with Wall along the line of Watling Street is evident. Tel: 01743 761330.

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ISBN 0-7500-0852-0

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Videos

The Archaeological Detectives, English Heritage, 1990. 27 minutes. Key Stages 2 & 3.

Talkin' Roman, English Heritage, 1996. 20 minutes. Key Stage 2 and initial teacher training. Available on free loan or purchase.

Software package

The Roman Conquest of Britain, English Heritage, 1994. Compatible with BBC B and Acorn Archimedes 400 computers. Key Stage 2.

All English Heritage resources are available by post from: English Heritage, PO Box 229, Northampton NN6 9RY.

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**English Heritage
Education Service
Freepost 22, (WD214)
London W1E 5EZ
Tel: 0171-973 3442
Fax: 0171-973 3443
www.english-heritage.org.uk**

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