

Lotions and Potions

Medicine in the
Roman world



About this book

Important! This is a PDF version of an ibook. All the information you need is in this version but if you want to use the interactive features you will need to download the ibook from itunes for use on an iPad, iPhone or Apple computer.

We have left images of some of the interactive features so you can decide if you want to download the ibook or not.



Ancient Roman healthcare

In this book you will discover the ways Romans tried to prevent disease, how they made medicines and what they used to perform operations.

Suitable for Key Stage 2 pupils.

Can be used as a stand alone resource, but is best used to complement the 'Medicus' role play session held at the National Roman Legion Museum.

See the last page for booking details.



Being Sick in Roman Times

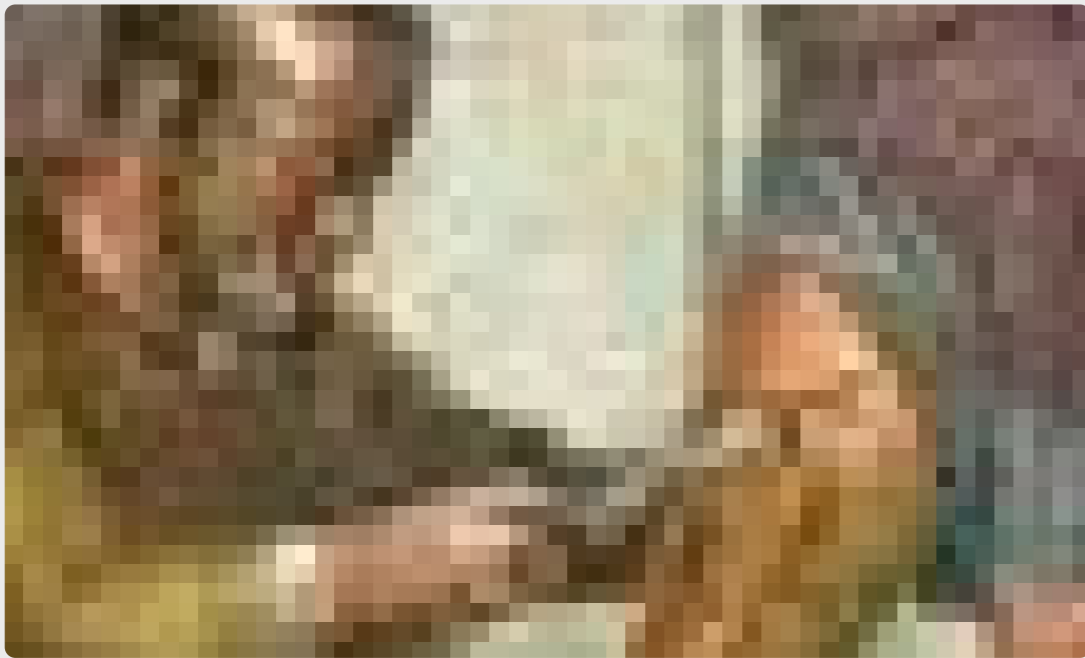


Many people got sick or injured in Roman Britain. But there was no National Health Service (NHS) to help them like there is today. No free doctors, dentists, nurses or hospitals.

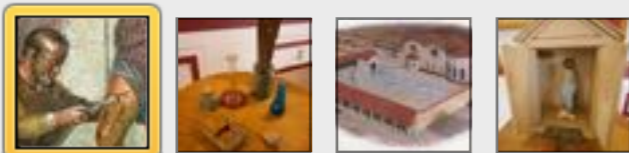
So what did the Romans do? How could they stop getting ill and who would they go to if they were?

Romans believed it was important to keep fit and healthy

The Romans:



Had doctors and surgeons to treat the sick.



Prevention is better than cure!

The Romans did many things to stop themselves getting sick.



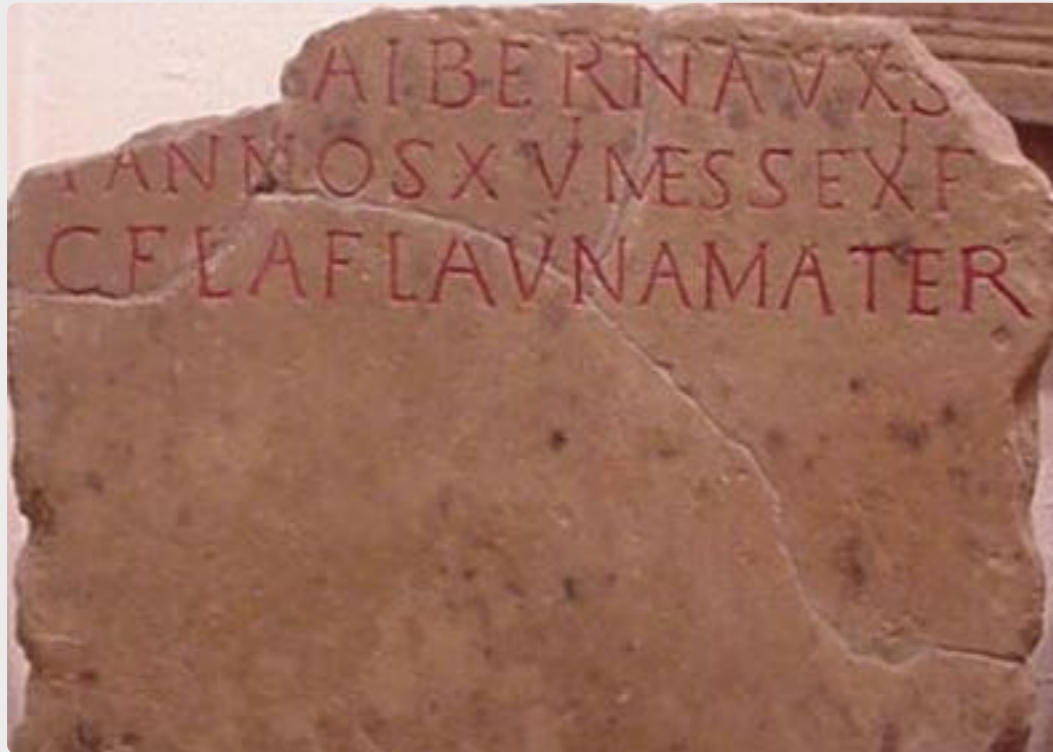
Keep clean at the Baths

Keeping clean meant good health. Wealthy Romans might have their own bath house, but most people visited the public baths.



How long did Romans live?

Roman Tombstones



To the spirits of the departed; Julia Iberna lived 16 years, 11 months; Flavia Flavina, her mother had this set up.

...

From what we know most Romans died younger than people do today.

Many people died from diseases that can be easily cured now.

It is believed that half of all Romans would be dead by the age of 5.

A lot of women died during childbirth.

Not everybody died young: some people lived into their 70s and 80s. There is a tombstone in the

The Doctor

A Roman doctor was called a **Medicus**.

A **Medicus** would charge a lot of money to treat you.

Some doctors became very rich by charging their patients a lot of money to treat them.

The Medicus was usually a man, although women could work as **midwives** and help other women having babies.



The Pharmacist

The Romans also had **chemists**. A Roman chemist was called a **Pharmacist**.

You could buy medicines from a Pharmacist.

Or you could buy ingredients from their shop to make your own.



Free cures?

But what if you had no money? You could always pray. Prayer was free!

Romans prayed to the god **Asclepius**, the god of healing.

Statues of Asclepius show him with a stick with a snake crawling up it.

This is called the 'Rod of Asclepius'. We still use it as a sign of healing today.

Asclepius



This is a statue of the Roman god, Asclepius. It can be seen at the Museum of Epidaurus Theatre in Greece.



Visiting a Medicus



A trip to the Medicus



The Medicus greets his patients in the waiting room. Their colourful cloaks show they are wealthy people. The poor people wait in a separate area.

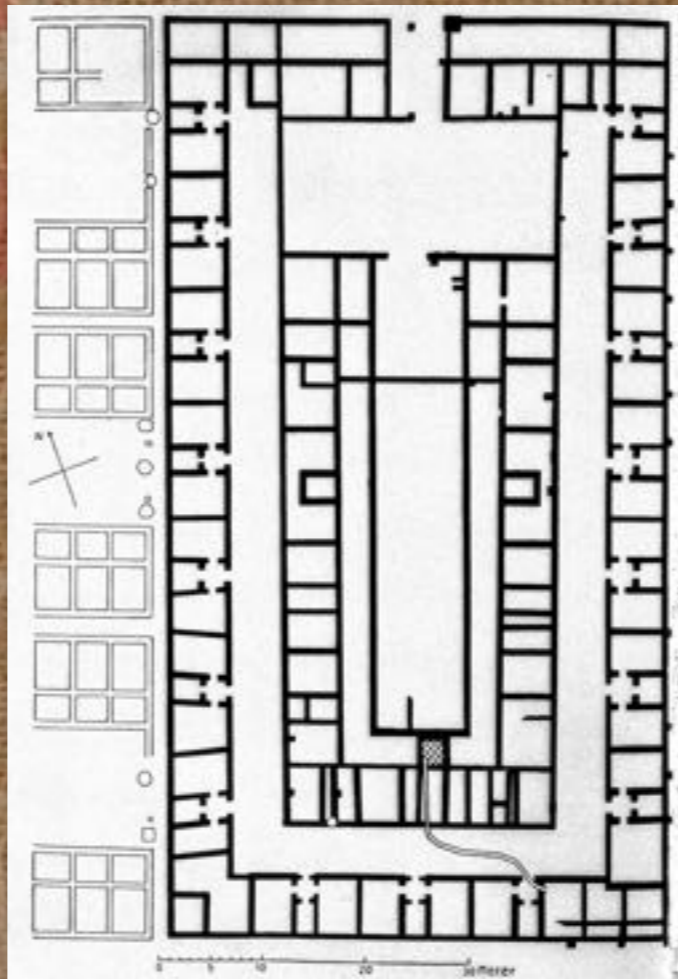
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Did the Romans have hospitals?

Yes they did, but only for the army. Every fortress had its own hospital where sick or injured soldiers would be treated. Each hospital had a garden where herbs were grown to treat the soldiers.

The hospital in Caerleon was behind the bathhouse. Nothing can be seen of it today.

The picture here shows a plan of a hospital from the Roman fort of Housesteads on Hadrian's Wall.



Strange Medicine!

The Romans understood some things about illness and how to treat the sick. But some of their ideas seem a bit strange to us!



Strange Medicine Movie

Warning! Some scenes may be unsuitable for the easily upset.
No vegetables were hurt during the making of this film.

Advertising your business

A Medicus or Pharmacist would advertise their business to get more customers. This would help them make more money. Romans used shop signs or floor **mosaics** to advertise. Not everyone could read so it was important to use pictures. That way, everyone would know what they were selling.

So far there hasn't been any signs advertising the Medicus discovered. However, you can imagine what they may have looked like. Why not try and design your own?



Tools of the Trade

Medical instruments



Medical Instruments.



Roman doctors used lots of different tools to help them in their work. You can see some of them below. They are on display at the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon.

Compare Old and New



Antiseptic



To stop bleeding



Plaster



Bone saw



Flower Power

Plants were used to make medicines. We grow some of these plants in our garden at the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon.



Flower Power



Quince - eye problems were a common complaint in Roman times. A few drops of Quince oil were said to work well on healing sore eyes.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Quitte_Cydonia_oblonga-2.jpg



Medicine Today

In Britain today we have the National Health Service (NHS). It was created in 1948 after years of hard work from various individuals who felt the current healthcare system was insufficient. One of these individuals was a Welshman called Aneurin Bevan.

If you are sick or injured you can get free treatment. You can be treated in a hospital, a doctor's surgery or at home.

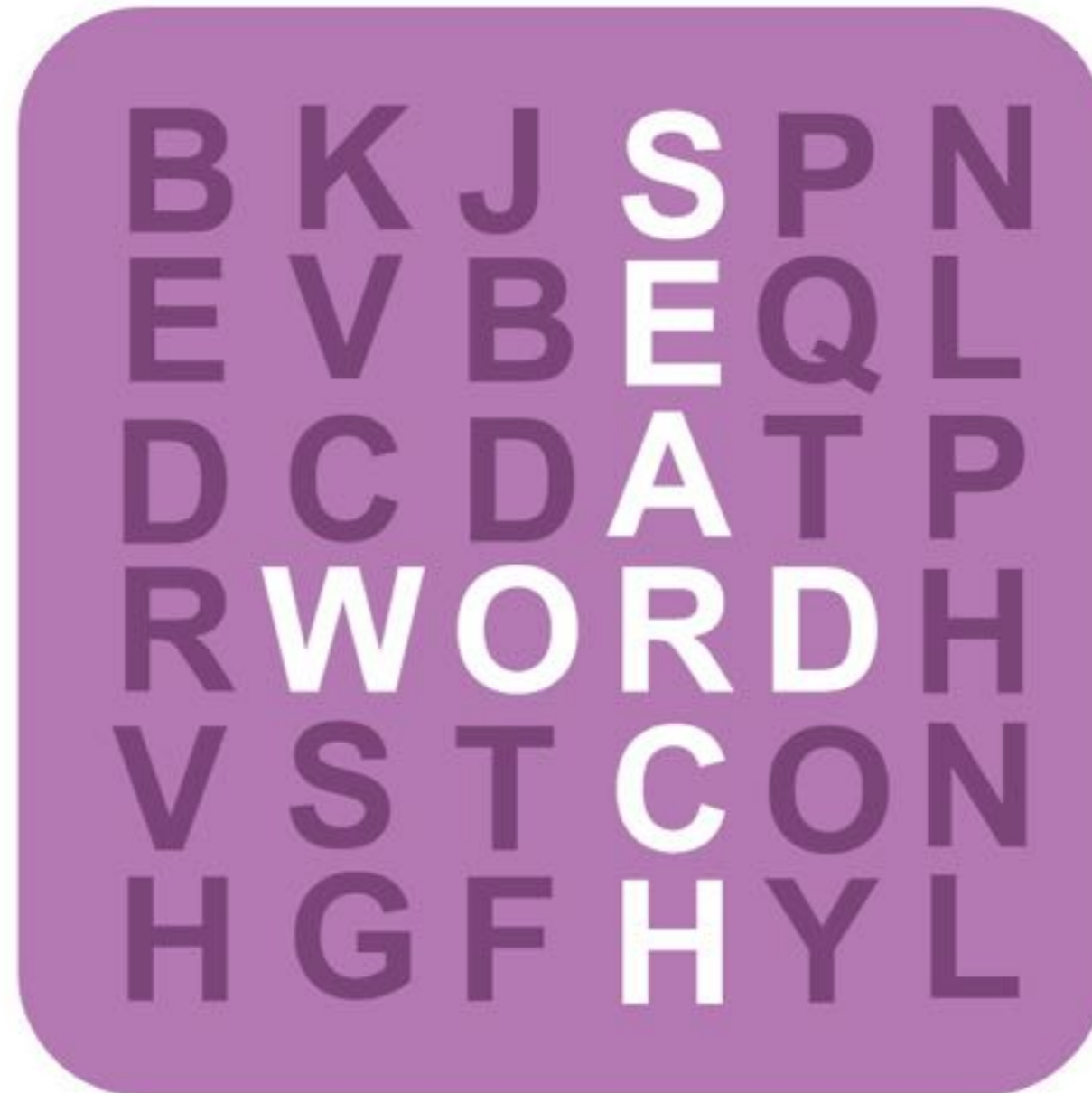
There are lots of specialists such as doctors, nurses, opticians, dentists, and paramedics.

What would the Romans think of that?



Aneurin Bevan

Roman Medicine Wordsearch



See how many words you can find in this wordsearch.

Medicus - Roman Medicine

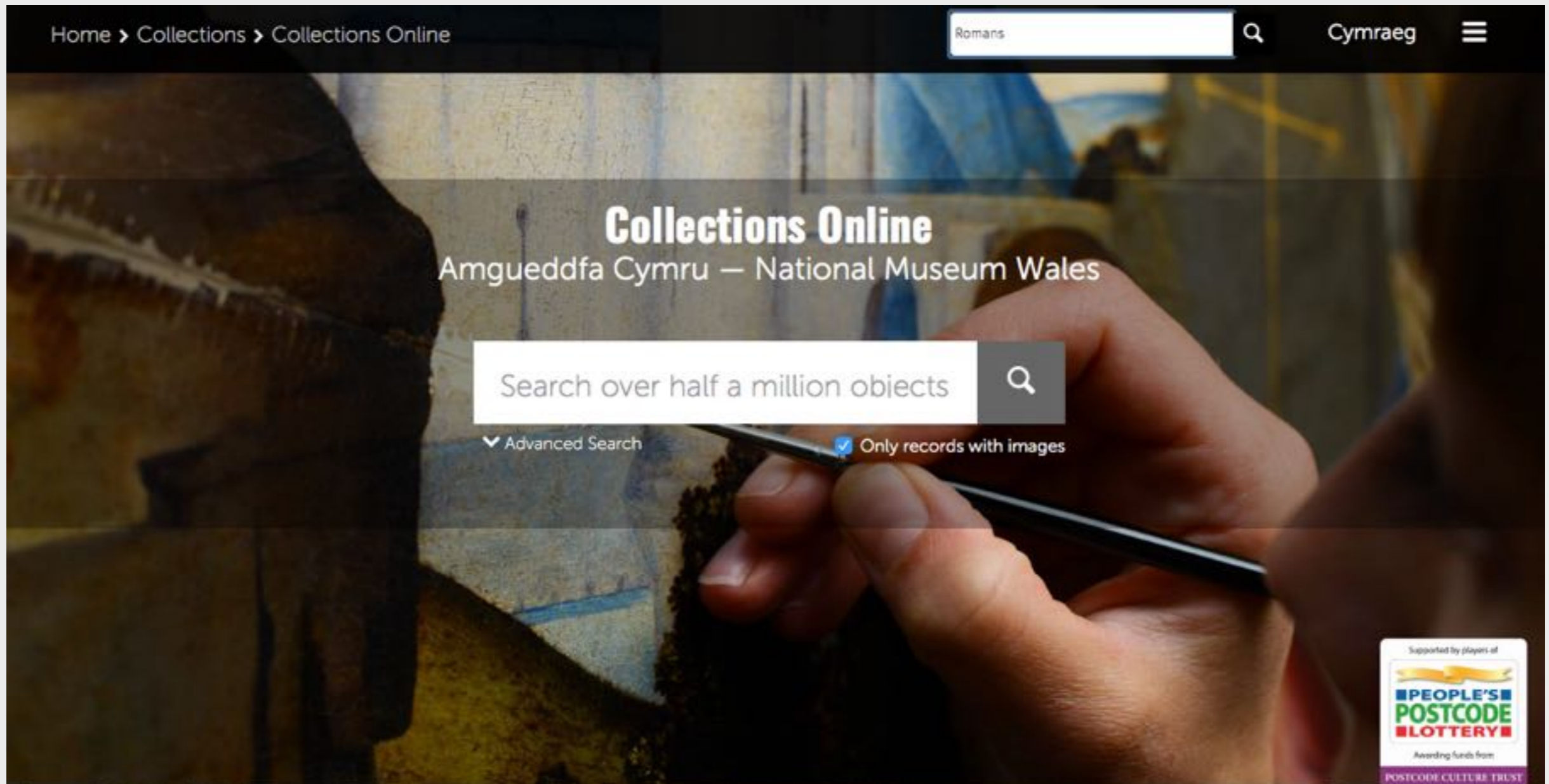


Herbal remedies, amputations and horse-hair stitches are all treatments performed by the Roman doctor. Find out about Roman medicine and the role that the gods played in healing the sick in this interactive role-play session.

Led by a costumed facilitator. All schools and groups must book in advance, even if they are not booking a workshop. Call: (029) 2057 3546 to book <https://museum.wales/roman/learning/>

For information on accessibility, visit: <https://www.apple.com/uk/accessibility/ipad/>

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Chemists

Someone who makes and sells medicines.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - Lotions and Potions

Glossary

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Related Glossary Terms

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Logos

A design or symbol to advertise a business.

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Medicus

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Related Glossary Terms

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Chapter 1 - Lotions and Potions

Midwives

Someone who helps deliver babies. In Roman times this was usually a woman.

Related Glossary Terms

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Chapter 1 - Lotions and Potions

Mosaics

A picture on a floor made with lots of little pieces of tile.

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