

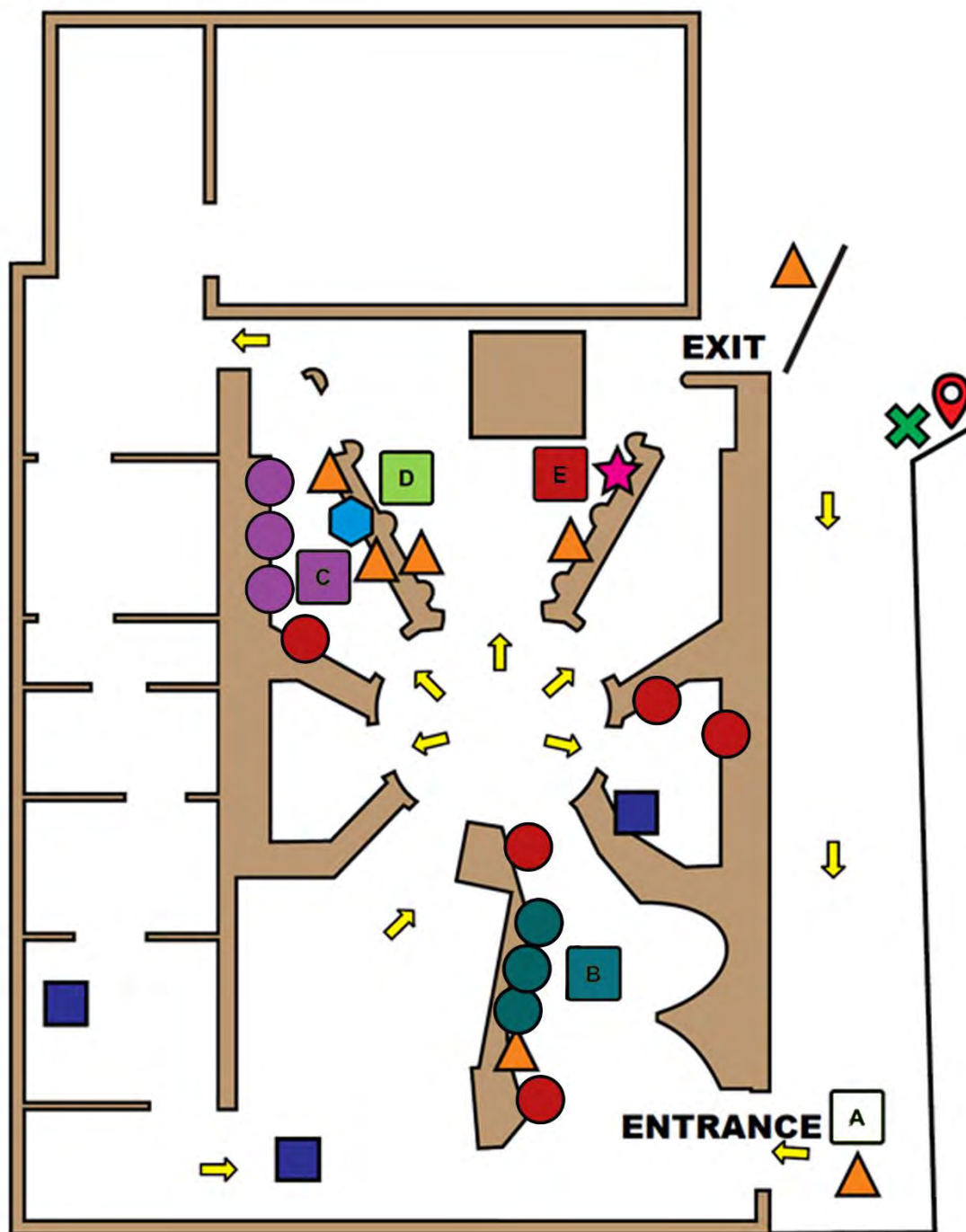
# MAPPING AN UNEVEN PATH

## Easy Read Guide



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VERULAMIUM MUSEUM, ST ALBANS

# Exhibition Map



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Welcome to the Verulamium Museum!

This guide is written with short, easy to read sentences.

It can be used by anyone.

This guide is for an exhibition called "Mapping an Uneven Path".

It looks at how ancient Romans thought about health and disability.



This guide takes you on a tour of the exhibition. It looks at eleven different objects.

The exhibition has six panels with illustrations on them. The illustrations are in this guide.

There is also a video and some audio recordings.



It uses information from history books.

It also shows special objects from the Museum's collection.



It also includes responses from local disabled people who were asked to share their thoughts and feelings.



The exhibition opens at 10 o'clock in the morning.



The exhibition closes at 4.00 in the afternoon.





There are members of staff who can help you. They wear dark blue trousers and white shirts.

They also wear these badges. You can ask them about their favourite museum objects.



A lot of young school children visit this museum every day.

There might be school children here when you visit.



We have ear defenders.

If you would like to use them let a member of staff know.



We have a wheelchair on site.

If you need to use it, let a member of staff know.

A



## Introduction to “Mapping an Uneven Path”

Life is like a journey.

Our health is affected by the things we do, places we go and people we meet.

This exhibition explores how ancient Romans looked after their health and treated disabled people.

Local disabled people helped make this exhibition by sharing their own lived experiences.

B



## Searching for Healing

Ancient Romans described medicine as an art.

Roman doctors believed that bodies contained four fluids: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile.

These fluids had to be balanced. If your body had too much or too little, you would become ill.

To prevent this, Roman doctors would tell people to exercise and diet.

They could also give people medicine and perform surgeries.



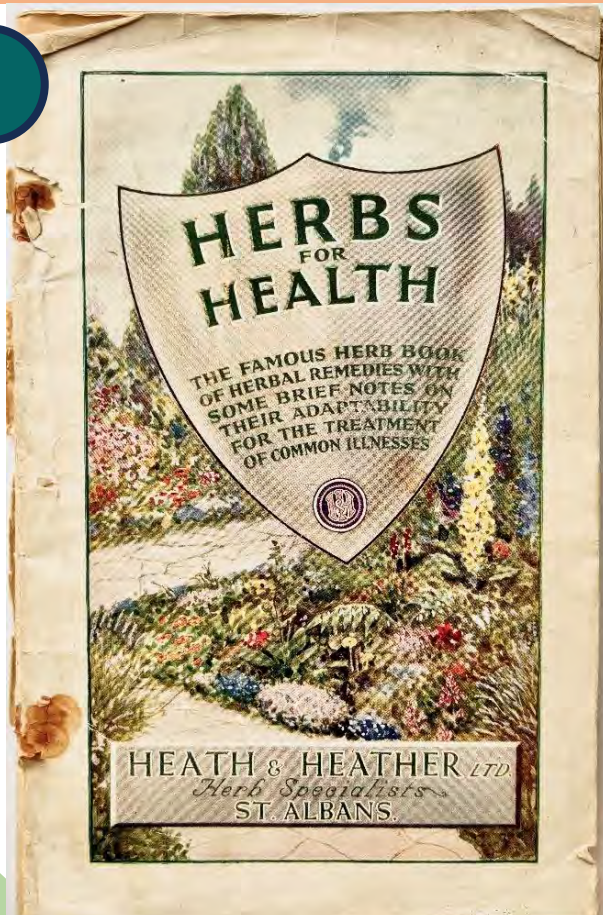
## Amulet of Isis and Horus

Ancient Romans learnt about medicine from many different places, such as Greece and Egypt.

Ancient Egyptians knew lots about medicine. They could fix broken bones and treat skin diseases.

This amulet depicts the Egyptian goddess Isis, holding her child Horus. Isis was believed to be a great healer.

Isis was very popular with the Romans, who spread her image across the empire.



## Herbs for Health Catalogue

Roman doctors travelled across the empire.

They had to be able to take care of people with whatever was locally available.

This colourful Victorian catalogue from St Albans contains drawings of herbs and talks about how they can be used to treat illnesses.

Many of these same herbs could have been used by Roman doctors who came to Britain.



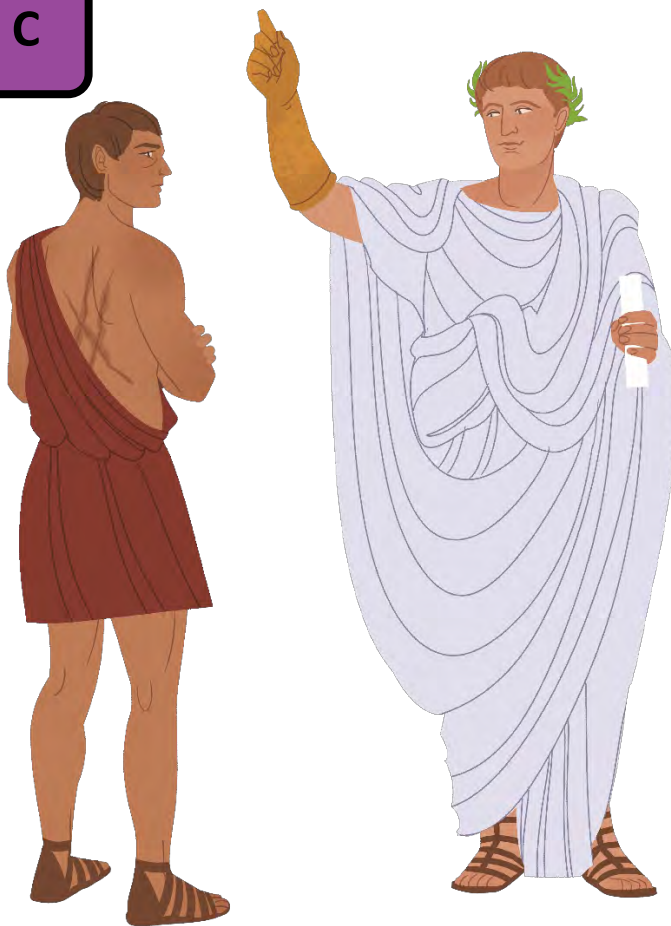
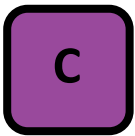


## Votive foot

Not everyone had access to a doctor in Roman Britain.

Some would seek care in temples and make offerings to the gods.

These could include votives, which depicted the body parts that needed treatment.



## Care-full Journeys

Someone's health could be influenced by who they were and what jobs they did.

This could affect how people treated them.

For example, if you were a soldier in the Roman Army, you were more likely to have access to a doctor.

However, fighting causes injuries. You could lose a limb or be badly scarred.

Sometimes veterans were respected for their injuries. Sometimes they could be treated badly.





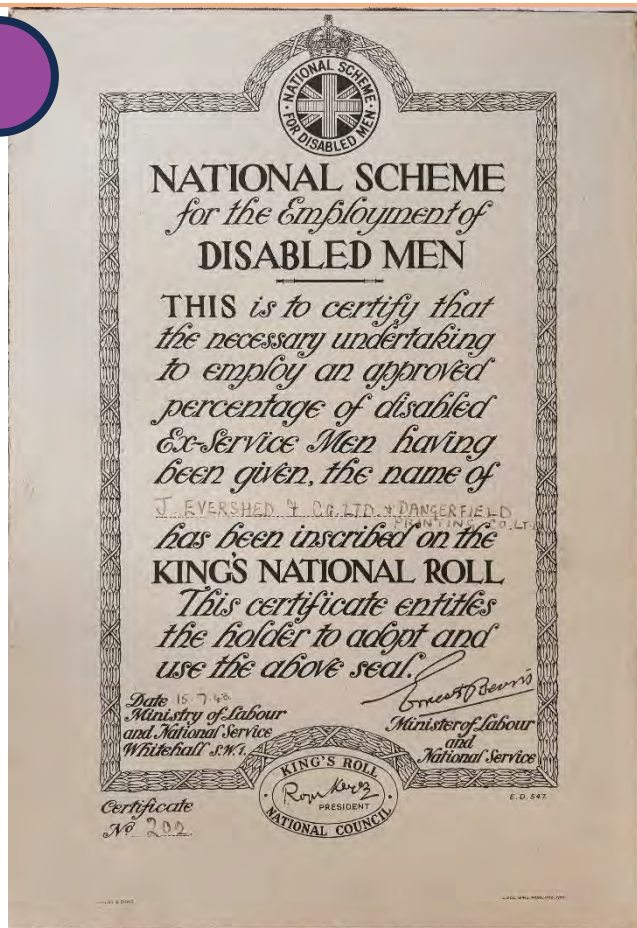
## Oculist Stamp

Oculists were Roman doctors who treated eye problems.

Eye infections were very common in the past.

Doctors would make the medicine.

They would use stamps to tell someone what the medicine was for, like a prescription.



## Work for Veterans Certificate

Veterans of the Roman Army were awarded with money and land after they completed 25 years of service.

Before then, if you were injured and could no longer fight, you might be assigned a different job in the Army.

In modern times, returning to normal life after serving in the Army can be difficult.

This certificate celebrates a local St Albans business for supporting disabled veterans during the Second World War.



## Mother Nurture

In Roman times, it was very common for women to work as wet nurses.

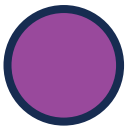
Breastmilk was recognised as being very good for your health.

The Romans believed it helped to treat illnesses like fever and nausea.

Therefore, breastfeeding was seen as very important.

Women would breastfeed together with family and friends.

This meant they could look after each other and work together to care for others.



## Mother Goddess Figurine

Goddesses depicting mothers were worshipped in the ancient world. Their statues were common in many homes.

The museum looks after multiple fragments, such as this one.

You might just be able to see a pair of arms holding two babies.



This is a replica of a complete Mother Goddess figurine.

This type of figurine was very popular in Roman Britain.

D



## Body Perfect?

Some ancient Roman authors wrote unkind things about disabled people.

They were writing for small audiences: wealthy and powerful people.

Romans would use a person's physical appearance to judge them.

These attitudes don't represent everyone.

We don't have many accounts from disabled people themselves.

E



## In Our Hands

In this exhibition, we worked with a group of local disabled people to help tell stories.

Their experiences help us to think about what life might have been like for disabled people in the past.

They have chosen objects from the Museum to help tell their stories.

These stories are important. They remind us that no single voice can represent everyone.

Some of the people who shared their stories wanted to share their name. Others only their initials.



On each of the labels written by our co-producers, you'll spot these butterflies.

You may have noticed some already.

They represent hope.





## Iron shackles

C.M. chose these iron shackles. They would have been worn by an enslaved person.

Slavery is when a person is treated like an object by another person.

Slavery was very common in ancient Roman times. They would buy and sell people and use them for hard work.

Being an enslaved person was hard. Many who were would have been hurt.

Those who refused to work or tried to escape would have to wear chains like these.

C.M. says it's important we do not forget them.

It is important to treat everyone equally and look after one another.



## Roman Armour

Katherine chose these remains of Roman armour. They would have been worn by a Roman soldier.

Katherine says that disabled people often must solve problems ourselves.

She was inspired by the story of a Roman general who lost his hand in battle. Rather than stop



fighting, he had a fake hand made so he could stay.

Katherine once had painful eczema on her arms. This meant she felt uncomfortable.

She wore a beautiful pair of black gloves to cover her arms. They protected her skin and helped her feel more confident.

Her gloves were her armour.



## Temple Offerings

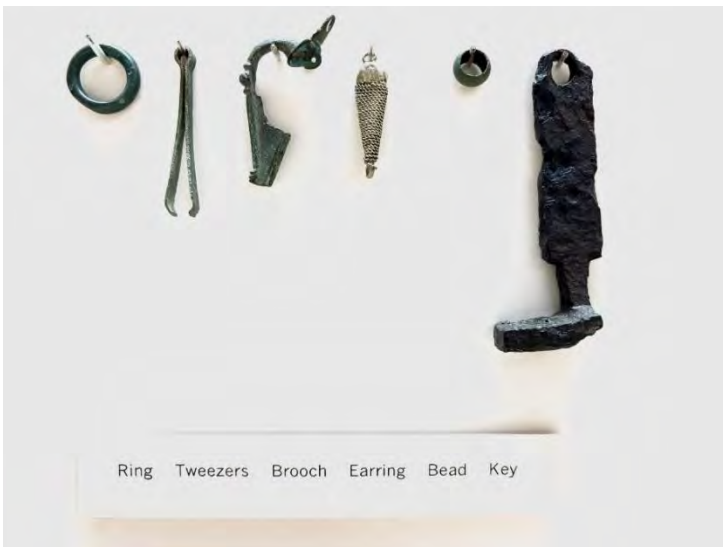
Jo chose these remains of an offering to the goddess Cybele, who had a temple in Verulamium.

A citizen would burn pine seeds for Cybele, giving prayers of thanks or to ask a question.

Ritual was very important to the ancient Romans. Ritual is an action which is repeated in the same way each time.

Jo is autistic and she has many rituals to help her through her day.

She wonders whether her rituals would make her blend in during Roman times.



## Roman Baths

F.C. chose the Roman Baths. They were public and Verulamium's citizens could bathe together.

F.C. wondered if people were overly conscious of their bodies in front of other people.

There are many small tools at the Museum, like tweezers, which people would use to pluck hairs from their body.

They liked to look good.

However, some Roman writings tell us they think people went too far.

F.C. also wonders how a disabled person would use the Baths.

There were no rules about making them accessible.

Families and friends would bathe together, so could help one another.





## Spindle Whorl

B.L. chose this Spindle Whorl. Spindle whorls are used to spin yarn.

In Roman times, sewing and needlework were important skills.

They provided a means of making money.

B.L. thought about herself and others who enjoy sewing, knitting and crocheting.

Many people took up these skills during the COVID-19 pandemic to take care of themselves.



Thank you for visiting our exhibition. We hope you enjoyed.

As you leave, you will see a space to leave your feedback.

You can tell us what you think you learned, your favourite object that you saw, or how the exhibit made you feel.

Your feedback helps us improve the museum.

Please return this guide as you leave.

Thank you! 😊