

CARLEON 6

ROMAN BATHS WE ARRIVE AT 3.15

Now safely across the road we walk through the car park to the Baths.



Everyone pauses outside to look at the welcome placard on the wall showing a reconstruction of the baths as they would have looked to the Romans.



Inside when I announce our visit, everyone looks the other way.
"Did you book one today" the receptionist sternly asks, and who are you"
"Yes madam I did, and it's Cardiff U3A to you".

"Sorry, but I can't see you in the book"

"Perhaps if you look at the correct date, I venture, I think you have your diary open at the wrong week".

"Ah yes, here we are, how many of you are there"?

"36 I reply, and all waiting outside. I hope that you realise that it is free entry today for my group. I have booked with The National Museum of Wales and we are visiting under their educational scheme".

She glances at the donation box.

"Yes, I will remind them it is there, they are after all a wealthy bunch of Senior Citizens".

"We can not take you around you will have to let them do their own thing".

"That is quite in order madam, we are very versatile having had years of experience at looking after ourselves, we will be fine". I cross my fingers.

Returning outside to where you are all, yes all, patiently waiting, I give a quick overview of the bath and what we are to see inside the building.

"Are you listening"?

"Life was hard for a Roman legionary in first-century Wales. When he wasn't cooped up in his barracks or being barked at by a centurion he was out risking his life in skirmishes with ancient Britons. But here in Isca, one of just three permanent legionary fortresses in Britain, there were compensations. He could always hang out with his friends at the fortress baths

Inside the building you can explore the remains of the immense natatio, or open-air swimming pool, that once held more than 80,000 gallons of water. Thanks to the wonders of film projection you'll glimpse a Roman soldier still diving the depths today". The site was excavated in the late 1970s and was opened to the public for the first time in 1980".

In we go and stopping to look at the gifts, why do we always do that?



"Please finish your visit no later than 4.00 and you should have brought your note of the bus times

from here back to Newport" I notice several of you are now exhibiting a kind of glazed look to your eyes. The bus stop is not far away so we will meet outside in the car park, and walk over together. If you finish in here early enough you can always catch an earlier bus or go back over to the Priory again. Off you go, and enjoy your visit to these baths".







We gather in the car park, blinking in the sunlight after a most enjoyable time indoors.
"Time to catch the bus, so please follow on and I hope that all of you have all had a nice day".
And so we leave for the bus, but three short, now I wonder where they are?

Thanks for taking the time to `walk` with me through the day and I hope that you found it enjoyable. We will of course, once everything is back to normal and not `locked-down` or have the need for social distancing, actually visit Caerleon.

I hope that, if I have mentioned your name during the day, no offence has been caused.

Look after yourselves, and I hope to have pour over next BPT visit on May 14th to Usk. If so I will try to prepare it before hand rather than on the day itself.

Best wishes.

Mario