

Roman Loan Box

Contents

The objects in this box are a mixture of real and replica objects from the Roman period. All the objects can be handled over a soft surface.

Oil Lamps

Olive oil was brought to Britain from Mediterranean countries in tall jars called amphorae. With a linen wick pushed into the spout, the lamp would burn for about 3 or 4 hours giving a dim light



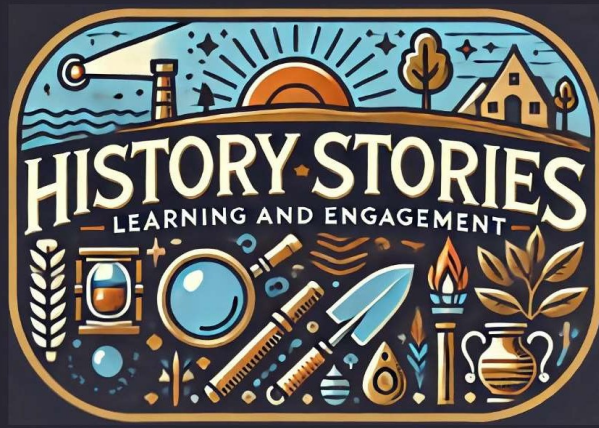
Perfume bottle

After bathing in a hot room, sweat and dirt were scraped from the body using a curved blade. Oils and perfumes from small bottles were then rubbed into the skin.

Ear scoop

This bronze instrument could also have been used for spooning ointment from bottles or as a surgical probe.





Bracelet

This example is made of bronze and would have been worn by a Roman woman.

Ring

Rings were worn by Roman men and women both above and below the knuckles of the fingers and even on their toes. The middle finger was left bare for superstitious reasons.

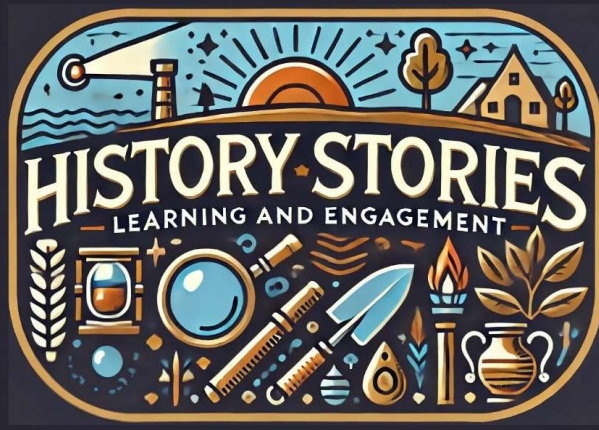


Bone hair pin

Pins were also made from bronze, silver and gold.

Needle

Roman women were taught to spin wool and sew from an early age. Britain was famous throughout the Empire for handmade garments such as the Birrus Britannicus, a kind of waterproof cloak with a hood.



Tweezers

These probably formed part of a manicure set carried by a Roman woman. The set might have included an ear scoop and nail cleaner.

Cloak pin

This bronze pin would have been pushed through the coarse woven material of a cloak to fasten it at the shoulder. The decorated end would probably have been sewn to the fabric.



Pottery flask

This flask probably contained oil which was applied to the body after bathing.



Spindle whorl

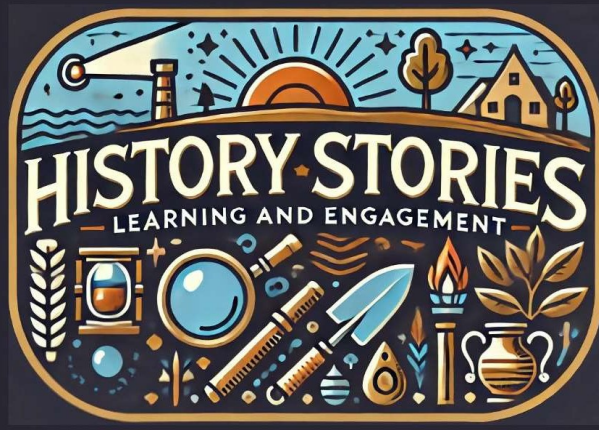
These have been found made from wood, bone, metal, stone and clay. Occasionally still attached to a spindle of wood or bone. They were used for spinning wool into a thread which could

then be woven into cloth on a loom.

Replica Writing Tablet

The Romans used writing tablets to write letters, messages, notes and drafts of documents. Anything official that needed to last for a long time (records, contracts, legal documents), would be written in ink on thin pieces of wood or on parchment scrolls made from animal skin.





The tablets contained a layer of beeswax, which could be inscribed with a pointed 'stylus' (pen). Tablets could either be bound together with leather or fastened with metal binders. Once the inscription was no longer needed the wax was heated, smoothed and re-used.

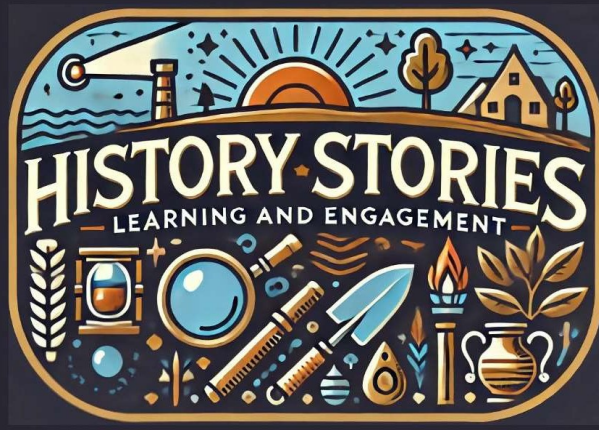
Replica Oil Lamp



Roman tiles

These tiles were part of a Roman building in Sussex. Some of them have paw prints from cheeky animals walking over the tiles while they were being made!





Replica Samian Ware Bowl

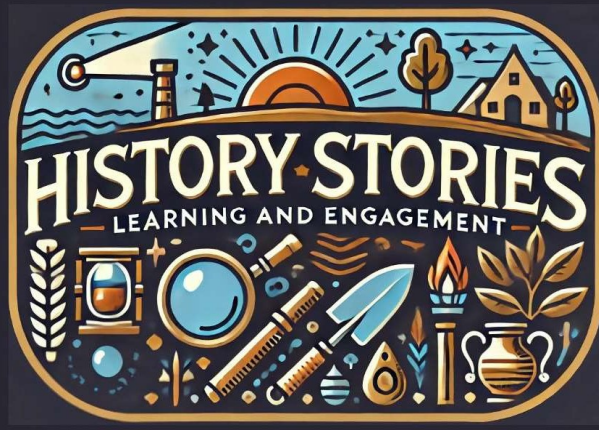


Samian Ware

This glossy red pottery was mass produced in Roman Gaul and the Rhineland during the first and second centuries AD. It was probably the largest single import into Roman Britain and is found on most sites from this period.

The makers

Roman potters often stamped their name on the bowls or the moulds in which they were made. Cinnamus and Divixtus worked in Central Gaul in the second half of the second century. Austrus left this area and started working in East Gaul. Butrio and Libertus may have worked together. Thousands of these makers are known to us, and their individual styles are often recognisable on fragments of their bowls.

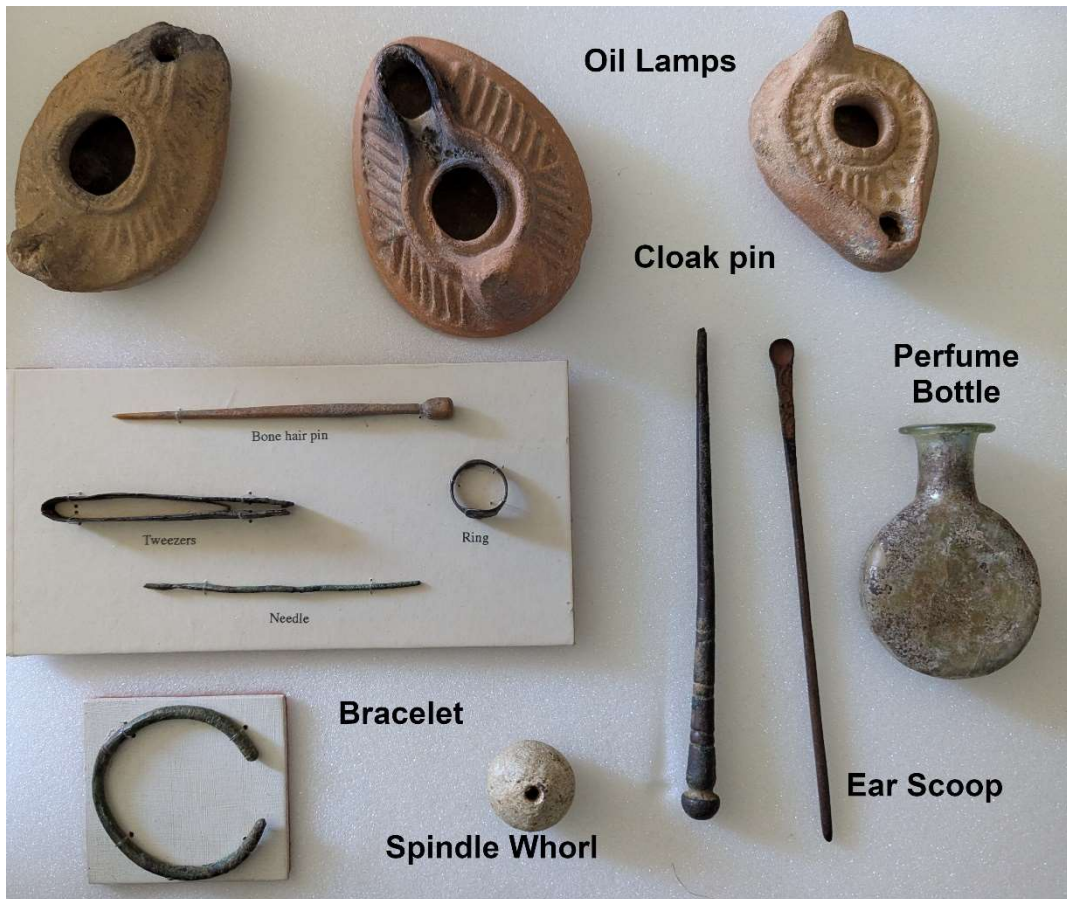
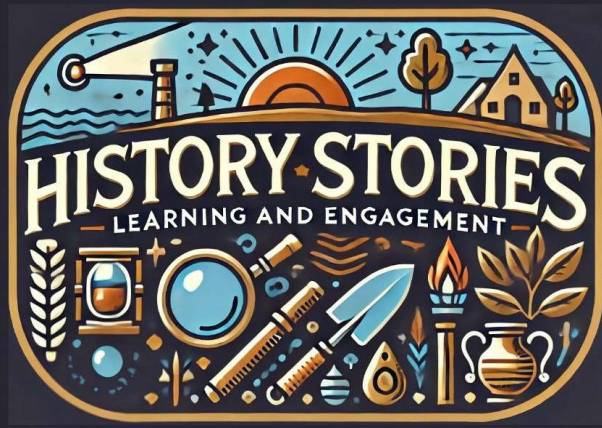


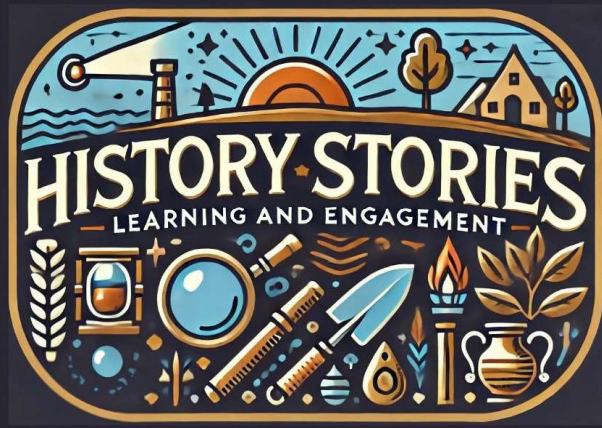
Decoration

The most common method of decorating Samian Ware involved creating a pattern of cavities in the walls of the mould used to shape the bowl. The bowl was then formed by pressing clay into the mould and into the cavities at the same time. After it had dried and shrunk away from the mould, the bowl could be withdrawn complete with its embossed, patterned surface.

The decoration on the replica bowl shows Mercury the god of merchants and Minerva the goddess of wisdom. During the Roman occupation of Britain, Mercury and Minerva were adopted by the native Celtic tribes. In the North West the Brigantes tribe renamed her Brigantia. We now know her as Britannia and on bank notes, she can be seen, still with Minerva's spear, shield and helmet.

Eventually, by the third century AD, the import of Samian Ware stopped and the British pottery industry expanded, possibly employing some craftsmen from abroad.





Replica Writing tablet

Roman Tile from
Sussex with cat
paw print

Replica oil
lamp

Replica Samian Ware bowl