

RUNNING WATER

Each town needed lots of fresh water to supply its bath-houses, toilets and drinking fountains. This water was carried to the towns through a system of pipes and channels, called aqueducts.

STREET LIFE

Most towns had straight, paved streets laid out in a neat grid pattern. The main streets were broad, but there were many narrow alleys too. Often, the streets were full of waste, which people had thrown out of windows, so stepping stones were built to let people cross without getting filthy.

There were no drains upstairs, so some people threw their dirty water out of the window, though this was against the law.



The streets of a town were lined with dozens of different shops, from butchers and fruit sellers to carpenters and sandal makers. There were also taverns and restaurants, as well as markets where people could buy anything from vegetables to slaves.

This photograph shows part of the ruined Roman town of Pompeii.

MEETING AND GREETING

In the middle of town was a large market square, or forum, where everyone could mingle. There, merchants bought and sold goods, taxes were collected, and people played games. The forum also had a raised platform where town officials stood to make speeches to the crowds.

Around the forum were statues, monuments and temples, and along one side was a huge building called a basilica. The basilica was used as a law court, a town hall and a public meeting place.

INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can take a virtual tour of Pompeii, and see inside a merchant's home, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com

