

How the Romans changed Britain

By Michael Coleman

- NARRATOR:** One of the biggest changes the Romans brought to Britain was peace. The tribes no longer fought each other. And, so long as they didn't rebel, the Romans no longer fought them. They were happy to let the Britons live peacefully – just so long as they fulfilled two conditions. The first was to hand over regular amounts of money...
- TAX MAN:** Pay your taxes here! That's it, sir, empty your pockets! The more you own, the more you pay...
- NARRATOR:** The second condition was that – although they could stick with their own gods – Britons were supposed to worship the Roman gods and goddesses as well. This didn't only mean unseen gods like Jupiter, the king and sky god; or Neptune, the god of the sea and Venus, the goddess of love. It meant a few others who'd been seen by lots of people...
- PHYSICIAN:** Good morning, Emperor. How are you feeling today?
- EMPEROR:** Terrible. Have you got my test results yet?
- PHYSICIAN:** Ye-es. Do you want the good news or the bad news?
- EMPEROR:** The good news.
- PHYSICIAN:** The good news is that you'll very soon be a god!
- EMPEROR:** But....Emperors only become gods when they're dead.
- PHYSICIAN:** That's the bad news.
- NARRATOR:** When their emperor died, Romans believed he would take his place in the heavens amongst all the other gods. Gods and goddesses were worshipped in buildings called temples. A temple could be dedicated to one god or many and they could be found in every town.



History Clips: The Romans

- NARRATOR:** Towns were another big change that the Romans brought. They were built for soldiers and officials who decided to stay in Britain when they retired. These towns were like Roman towns, of course! They all had straight streets and neat rows of buildings. At the very centre was the forum, where public meetings took place. Next to the forum would be the building where government officials worked, called a basilica. Roman buildings could be very grand indeed, because the Romans were terrific builders. This was made possible by something they'd been the first to discover...
- TEACHER:** What do you think you're doing, Maxima? This is a science practical, not a mud pie making session.
- MAXIMA:** I'm not playing, sir. I've made a discovery! Look. If I put some volcanic sand in a bucket, mix in some lime and then add some water, you get...
- TEACHER:** A soggy mess.
- MAXIMA:** No, sir, it goes really hard.
- TEACHER:** Rubbish. Give me that bucket at once. My foot!
- MAXIMA:** I'm going to call it concrete, sir...
- NARRATOR:** Knowing how to make concrete and mortar – a mixture that helped stick stones together – enabled the Romans to build everything from harbours to towns. Their building work began almost as soon as they'd successfully invaded. Their soldiers needed somewhere solid to live – and Roman forts were just that...
- MARCUS:** Britannia Fort Number 17. Legionary Marcus speaking.
- MUM:** Marcus! Hello, love! It's Mum! What's it like in your new fort?
- MARCUS:** Nice and safe, Mum. It's got a moat and high stone walls with watch towers.



- MUM: Oh, that's good. And I hope they're feeding you properly!
- MARCUS: Yes, the fort's got its own granary for storing food. It's huge, 'cos there are hundreds of us in here. We live in large huts called barracks, but inside it's eight soldiers to a room. That's not so bad. But when we go to the latrine – that's the toilet block - all eight of us have to sit side-by-side!
- MUM: Ah, that's nice.
- MARCUS: It's not!
- MUM: It is. It means you're seeing lots of your friends! Bye!
- NARRATOR: Telephones hadn't been invented, of course, so worried mothers couldn't really ring up their lonely Roman soldier sons. But they certainly did send letters and parcels to cheer them up. Perhaps they popped in some toothpaste – another Roman invention. Not a very nice one, though: Roman toothpaste was made using urine!

