

The Roman legacy - 2

By Michael Coleman

- NARRATOR:** Walls and buildings we can see. But there's also a lot of evidence the Romans were in Britain from things we don't so much see as experience. The legal system we know today began life under the Romans – for example, trials before a trusted judge. Britain became a Christian country in 380 AD, when Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Yes, Christmas began under the Romans too! When the Roman Empire switched to Christianity, the winter festival of Saturnalia - in honour of the god Saturn - was turned into the celebration of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. And why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem at all? Because:
- READER:** '...a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus that a census of the whole world should be taken...'
- NARRATOR:** A census is a survey of the people living in a country. Yes, the census which is still carried out in Britain every ten years began with the Romans! And Emperor Augustus, who decreed that famous census, is still with us in another way...
- AUGUSTUS:** Augustus speaking! The month of August, is named after little old me!
- NARRATOR:** Yes, our calendar dates back to Roman times – as you can tell from the names of some of the other months...
- JULIUS CAESAR:** Julius Caesar, speaking. July is named after me!
- JUNO:** My name is Juno, the Roman goddess of marriage. June is named after me.
- MARS:** And the month of March is named after me: Mars the Roman god of war!



History Clips: The Romans

- NARRATOR:** How about Latin? Until around 1400 AD - a thousand years after the Romans left – books in Britain were written in Latin. Surely that's changed...
- COMPERE:** Welcome to the *Latin Legacy Challenge*! Peter, our contestant, has to describe his life in sentences which do NOT have a Latin word. Four buzzes like this and you're out, Peter. Away you go.
- PETER:** I live with my family.
- COMPERE:** Sorry. 'Family' comes from the Latin word 'familia', which means 'family.'
- PETER:** I go to school.
- COMPERE:** 'School' comes from the Latin word 'schola' – which means 'school'!
- PETER:** My school has a library.
- COMPERE:** Oh dear. 'Library' comes from the Latin word 'liber', meaning 'book'! Only one life left...
- PETER:** Right, this one can't fail. I enjoy using my computer!
- COMPERE:** Sorry. Even some modern words are descended from Latin. 'Computer' comes from 'computare', which is Latin for 'calculate'. I'm afraid you're out.
- PETER:** Grr. Idiotic game!
- COMPERE:** 'Idiotic' comes from the Latin 'idiota'...
- NARRATOR:** The Romans may no longer be in Britain, but plenty of what they brought is still with us today. They may be gone, but they are not forgotten!

