

The Legacy of the Roman Empire

The legacy of the Romans is extremely important. Many things that form part of everyday life were introduced or improved by the Romans. Over the centuries since the collapse of the Roman Empire, Roman ideas, literature, art and architecture have influenced many people around the world.

Some examples of things that Romans introduced to Britain that are still in use today:

| Architecture | Art | Literature | Language (Latin) |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Sanitation (sewage) | Aqueducts | Education | Irrigation (water supply) |
| The calendar (names of months, leap years) | Coins | Cement and bricks | Public heated baths |
| Turnips and carrots | Paved streets and pavements | Apples, pears and grapes | Benefits (free food) for poor citizens |
| Roads | Wine | Cats | Stinging nettles |
| Towns | Glass | Street Cleaners | Shops |
| Laws | Tenement Blocks (blocks of flats) | Public order | Firemen and Police |
| Parks | Cabbages & peas | Public libraries | Public notices and advertisements |

Literature

Roman authors followed the famous Greek authors, often developing and building upon Greek writing. Most surviving literature is written for or by the rich. Writers were supported by the rich and so wrote what their patrons were interested in. Many writers since the fall of the empire have been influenced by the Romans including Shakespeare (Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra), Robert Graves (I Claudius), Milton (Paradise Lost), Dante (Inferno) and James Joyce (Ulysses).



Architecture

Many Roman buildings still stand - just this is evidence of how good Roman architecture was. Roman architecture has many connections with Greek architecture through the use of pillars and arches. Since the Renaissance, this style has been popular around the world.



Art

Roman art has influenced many people. Just as with architecture, the Renaissance saw a rebirth in interest in classical art. The use of pictures of Emperors on coins and sculptures introduced powerful images to society.

Language

English is a mixture of many different languages, but it contains very many references to Latin. Some Latin words are used directly, some have been adapted - but the influence of the Romans in our language can easily be seen.

Sanitation

When the Victorians built sewers underneath towns in Britain, they copied the designs of Roman sewers. In York there is still a section of Roman sewer in use today. In Rome itself, the Roman system still does the job in parts of the city it has always done.

Aqueduct

Systems that still protect and carry water are in use today. Many fountains in Rome are still fed by the original Roman systems that fed them. We still use the general principle to feed towns today.

Education

Something we are all familiar with today, the idea that young people are taught skills and knowledge for life.

Irrigation

Water for crops is vital to certain crops and many countries would starve without the water brought in to quench the thirst of crops.