



Adam Hart-Davis will be back in town this June to deliver the Colchester Lecture at the Mercury Theatre. Mosaic Publicity's Gemma Rawlinson asks the popular TV presenter what he will be doing for Britain's oldest recorded Roman town.

What Adam Hart-Davies will do for us

There's a famous scene in Monty Python's *Life of Brian* in which Reg, leader of the People's Front of Judea, asks what the Romans have ever given them. Immediately, someone pipes up 'aqueduct', another person adds 'sanitation', and before long Reg — played brilliantly by John Cleese — is forced to sum up: "All right, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a fresh water system, and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?"

It's a great comic moment, but if you really want to explore the Roman influence on both Colchester and Britain, then you could wish for no better guide than Adam Hart-Davis, writer, scientist, photographer,



Throughout our interview, I'm struck by how Adam's infectious curiosity and good humour makes him such a top-class broadcaster, and one that is sure to wow a family audience at the Mercury Theatre with his stories of how London and Britain were built, the legacy left to us by our ancestors, and extracts from his books on subjects that range from stupid inventions to string. Which is just as well — over the years, the Colchester Lecture has been delivered by many outstanding speakers, including Paralympic

great Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, renowned scientist Lord Robert Winston, world-famous architect Rafael Vinoly, Timeteam's Tony Robinson and weatherman Michael Fish, so expectations are high!

The Lecture, which is co-ordinated and managed by Mosaic Publicity, attracts tremendous support from the local business community. We also hope that Adam's topic will turn people's thoughts to our town's unique Roman circus, uncovered four years ago. We are

extremely keen that the site is granted Heritage Lottery Fund sponsorship, allowing the site to be preserved and interpreted for everyone's benefit.

The circus is just one brilliant thing the Romans have done for us. To get the full picture, you'll have to come and hear Adam speak. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Tickets are priced at £10 (£9 concessions) and are available via www.mercurytheatre.co.uk or on 01206 573948.



Pictured top left: Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson with the Mosaic Publicity team

Pictured above: Members of the Mosaic Publicity team

naturalist, ambassador for charity and presenter of the BBC documentary series, *What the Romans Did for Us*. Luckily for us all, this good humoured and twinkling polymath will be bringing his zest, knowledge and wit to the stage at the Mercury Theatre on Thursday 25th June as he presents the 2009 Colchester Lecture to a packed audience, including the Mayor of Colchester, Councillor Henry Spyvee.

Appropriately enough, the lecture will be entitled "What Life and the Romans have done for Adam Hart-Davis". And boy, is Adam a master of his subject! When I ask why the Romans have been such an influence on him, he crackles with enthusiasm. "On my first day of filming for the BBC Roman series, they made me dress up in a suit of armour, which I can't say I was very happy about. But it was very useful to know just what it felt like to wear, as it made it much easier to convey to the audience.

"After this the BBC seemed to want me to continue dressing up, so you could say the Romans shaped my future. The numerous Roman feasts were an added advantage!"

So what was it about the Romans that most impressed Adam? "They were fantastic organisers and had a very strong army, but the most extraordinary thing for me is the legacy they left behind. Many of their building structures have stood the test of time and their straight roads still shape the Britain we know today."

I ask why Colchester was so important. "The Romans invaded Britain in the spring of 43AD," he begins. "They landed at Richborough in Kent and marched rapidly to take the stronghold at what is now Colchester.

"The invasion was quickly successful, partly because the Roman army was highly disciplined and had an effective logistical infrastructure, but also because it could draw on technology that was hundreds of years ahead of what was available in Britain. The newcomers introduced not only straight roads, elegant baths and flushing lavatories, but also rectangular houses, apples, pears, carrots, turnips, three-course meals and even hamburgers."

Hamburgers? "The bars in Londinium and other Roman towns sold not only hot breads, pastries and pies, but also fried patties of ground beef, salt, pine kernels and a slurp of wine, eaten with bread - clearly a precursor of the Big Mac"

The Colchester Lecture, now in its 29th year, is generously sponsored by:



The events team at Mosaic Publicity, which has managed the Colchester Lecture for the past six years, is proud and excited to have secured Adam Hart-Davis for 2009's event.

We recognise just how busy life can be, that's why our professional, skilled events team is more than happy to lighten the load and work in partnership with clients to create an event which fulfils their requirements. Mosaic's events management team has a passion for creating unique, effective and memorable events for any occasion. Try us!



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