

'SPQR', by Mary Beard

We all enjoyed this book. Mary Beard writes as she speaks, intelligent, trenchant, forthright and is very readable. She describes how a tiny settlement grew by a series of alliances as well as by war and rape. The early empire was ruled with a light touch and imperialist expansion only came with the nationalising of the army and the autocracy which replaced the Republic. It was at this time that the hodgepodge, haphazard development of the the city of Rome was replaced by buildings fitting for such an Empire. These are the buildings we still visit and admire today.