

An exhibition of “Aquileia, the great lost city” at The Royal Geographical Society

There will be an exhibition of “Aquileia the great lost city” at the Royal Geographical Society in the heart of London from 5th March to the end of May 2015. This is the first time that Aquileia has been shown outside of Italy.

Aquileia is unknown in the English speaking world and yet it was so crucial to Rome’s Defence and the creation of the Roman Empire. Julius Caesar used Aquileia as a military base, where the famous Xth legion was stationed, when he was conquering Gaul.

Peter Marshall, the Project Director/Creator and exhibitor, together with his assistant and photographer Giancarlo Piccinin, began working on this project in May 2012. There have been many meetings in London with Alasdair Macleod, Director of Events and Exhibitions at the RGS, who needed little persuasion to agree to show this exhibition for a period of three months.

The former British Ambassador to Rome, Sir Ivor Roberts, now President of Trinity College at Oxford University, along with many others who have offered their help and support, have helped us make this exhibition possible and we can only thank them all for their foresight and vision. This also includes those sponsors and donors who have made their contributions in kind to help pay for this non-profit and non-commercial exhibition that will help us all learn about a place that has been forgotten. Admission to the exhibition is free.

Aquileia has helped shape our modern world today. It is good for the region of Friuli Veneto Giulia, good for Aquileia, good for the local economy, and also for our children to learn about a place that has in many ways helped shape the modern world. It is also good for London to learn about a place that helped establish the city as a major trading centre, with its fine buildings and churches, modelled on those fine buildings that stood like giants in Roman Aquileia and elsewhere throughout the Roman world. The exhibition will draw positive attention at a time when the local economy, as elsewhere in Europe,

could do with a boost. We will all reap the benefits of increased tourism and the spotlight rightfully being shone on Aquileia’s unsurpassed cultural legacy. “Aquileia, the great lost city” will make the strong cultural bond between Italy and Britain even stronger, with the image of Aquileia restored to its rightful place as a “Great and Imperial City”, rich in the culture and beauty that once flowed, and still does, through the veins of this wonderful part of Italy.

How fitting that Aquileia should be going to London when “Londinium” was once the capital of Roman England! We can all feel proud of the city that survived Attila’s wrath when he destroyed it in 452AD, and support this exhibition in any way we can. Local institutions and cultural departments will benefit from this exhibition as it focuses on education and informing the British public about a very important historical place. One of the main ultimate objectives is to attract increased British tourism to Aquileia and to the FVG region as a whole.

Comments made by tourists who have visited Aquileia from the UK include the following: “The Basilica and the mosaic floor are quite stupendous!” and “Never knew the place existed”. That will change by May next year.

Once Londoners and other British people, along with the large Italian community living and working in London and the UK, not to mention the hundreds of thousands from all over the world who visit Britain, get a taste of this great city, they will want to go and see it for real, and we look forward to welcoming them in Aquileia when they do! The Mayor of Aquileia, The Foundation of Aquileia and the Museum of Aquileia in turn will prepare themselves for this new tourism wave, along with the Tourism Department of the FVG region.