A TOUR THROUGH THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Over the past few years, the interest in heritage and visits to memorial sites has grown considerably.
More and more people think that if they want to understand history there is no better way to visit the places where the events took place.

Our tour is targeted at a group of British scholars, who are interested in history and want to visit San Miniato in November, after visiting some significant places linked to the Great War and it is about the stories of personal bravery and sacrifice of extraordinary people in extraordinary times.

Day 1. London- San Miniato

Arrival at Pisa airport at 5.00 p.m. A coach will take you to the lovely "Ostello San Miniato" in San Miniato, a town located in the heart of Tuscany, where the Mayor decided to commemorate the Great War with two epigraphs and a shrine.

In the afternoon we can see an epigraph, which is located inside the "Church of the Saints Stefano and Michele". It commemorates seven soldiers who died during the First World War. The epigraph was inaugurated in 1921.

> Pace Eterna
> Ed Onore Perenne A Quei Forti
> Che Fidenti Nei Destini Della Patria
> Col Sacrificio Della Vita
> I Sacri Confini Ne Rivendicarono
> Capit. Nello Ponzanelli
> Cap. Dante Vensi
> Luigi Sgherri
> Antonio Vensi
> Guido Guglielmini
> Tranquillo Lapi
> Nello Brunelli

These soldiers are men who died of the wounds they had suffered in the battlefield or in hospital. Antonio Vensì died in an Austrian deportation camp in 1918.

We next visit the "Church of the Holy Trinity" in Via Rondoni, where we can see an epigraph, which was placed on its façade in 1920.

This church dates back to the 7th century and in the past, when the church was a school, a famous Italian writer, Giosuè Carducci, taught in this building .General Paolo Maioli and Corporal Francesco Benvenuti are two famous men who lived in San Miniato and fought in the Great War.

General Paolo Maioli was born in San Miniato in 1864. He was a career Army officer. He fought in the First World War and he was appointed General in 1917.He died at the age 54 on Mont Majo near Vicenza on 20 August 1918   because of his battle wounds. He was buried in San Miniato on 1 May 1922.

The "Silver Medal of Military Valor" was awarded to his memory by King Vittorio Emanuele III, with a decree.

The street which connects Piazza Bonaparte and Piazzetta Pancolle takes its name from this courageous General.

Corporal Francesco Benvenuti was born in San Miniato in 1894. He fought in the Great War and he died of his battle wounds in 1917.

After the visit to the church, we head off to the "Oratory of Santa Maria al Fortino" which contains a chapel built in memory to 456 soldiers who died during First World War. The King of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele III, visited San Miniato and inaugurated this chapel on 6 November 1932.In 1957 the bodies of the soldiers who were buried in the "Church of Santa Caterina" in Piazza XX Settembre were placed in the "Oratory of Santa Maria al Fortino", where a special shrine had been created.

I nomi dei valorosi confratelli
che per la liberta' e la giustizia
nel sacro nome d'italia
immolarono la gioventu' la vita
nella guerra mondiale
l'arciconfraternita di misericordia
volle qui eternati
Generale Paolo Maioli
Caporale Giuseppe Baglioni
Soldato Ugo Brucci
Caporale Francesco Benvenuti
Soldato Rainaldo Gazzarrini

During the Great War the young men who went to the front wrote letters and postcards in order to get in touch with their families. These letters and postcards were full of grammatical mistakes, as we can see from this postcard dated 17 September 1917, where a soldier writes his family asking about Cinci, probably one of his friends.

We suggest you go to the "White Truffle Exhibition", where we can taste typical products such as "salumi", "crostini", "truffled parmesan risotto", "pappa al pomodoro", "olive oil" and much more.

Overnight stay at "Ostello San Miniato".

DAY 2 **PISA – LONDON**
After breakfast transfer to Pisa Airport for your flight back home.

Greta Pasqualetti