



History of the RMRS

The Modern Legio XIII GMV. Unlike its illustrious predecessors, the Roman Military Research Society (otherwise known as [THE RMRS](#)) is strictly a spare-time, professional re-enactment group. Echoing its predecessors, [THE RMRS](#) is the successful marriage of two earlier groups. The original Society was formed in 1982 by a small group of individuals with a passionate interest in the history of the period and a desire to research and learn more about the Roman Army. The second group, more properly named *Vexillatio Legionis Geminae* (“a Detachment of the Twin Legion”), was originally based at St. Albans Roman Museum and had been created to demonstrate before the public, using a small number of men, the drill and discipline of the Roman Imperial Army - the army that had made Rome the undisputed master of the (then) “known world”.

In 1989, [THE RMRS](#) and *Vexillatio Legionis Geminae* formerly amalgamated to become one group, adopting the former group’s name and later the Lunt Roman Fort in Baginton near Coventry as its ‘spiritual’ base. As its name implies, [THE RMRS](#) continually researches all aspects of Roman military and civilian life, reporting progress in professional journals. For example, the experiences on the Nijmegen marches and Cheiroballistra reconstruction are recorded in the proceedings of the Roman Military Equipment Conference.

Today’s Society. [THE RMRS](#) is a nation-wide society whose members travel regularly to shows and training sessions as much as their full time employment allows. It is normal for a full weekend to be spent at a show site with practice sessions, “Living History” presentations and full displays intermingling. Longer periods on show for special productions or events are not unknown. While the military side is probably the most conspicuous, there is also a thriving civilian side to the Society. Living History displays are used to demonstrate a wide range of aspects of Roman life, such as food and drink, medicine, games and religion. The cook tent (known as the “*popina*”) routinely provides cooked food, following Roman recipes, for [THE RMRS](#) members at events.

[THE RMRS](#) works closely with English Heritage and have put on displays at many of their sites around Britain including Old Sarum (near Salisbury), Wroxeter Roman City (near Shrewsbury), on Hadrian’s Wall (at the Corbridge, Chesters, Birdoswald and Housesteads sites) and at Richborough, site of the Roman invasion of AD 43. The Society supported English Heritage’s “History in Action” events at Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire and, more recently, the “Festival of History” at Kelmash Hall, Northamptonshire. [THE RMRS](#) also displays at numerous other sites and events around the country, for example Chester, York, the Museum of London and Whitehall Roman Villa, to name a few.

[THE RMRS](#) is proud to work with other Roman re-enactment groups including Legio XX Valeria Victrix (The Ermine Street Guard), Legio II Augusta (based in Hampshire), Legio VI Victrix (Newcastle), Legio VIII Augusta (North Wales) and Legio IX Hispana (Kent).

“Battle Honours”. In May 1992 at Llantrisant, the “Battle of the Celts -v- The Roman Army” took place for the first time in nearly 2000 years. This was a landmark in the history of [THE RMRS](#) as it is the first recorded instance in the UK of this type of battle display. (the Romans “won” of course).

During August 1994, [THE RMRS](#) organised and participated in a 122 mile sponsored march along the Sarn Helen - a series of Roman roads running from Conwy, North Wales to Carmarthen, South Wales. Taking nearly a fortnight to complete, the march raised £1500 for charity.

In June 2003, and again in 2005, [THE RMRS](#) accompanied Legio II Augusta to Kalkriese in Germany, the site of the Varian disaster of AD 9.

In August 2003, [THE RMRS](#) celebrated a unique event at a display in Caerleon, South Wales. The occasion saw the recreation of a full Roman wedding ceremony that allowed two of the group’s members to be “married” according to Roman wedding rites. The display required months of research and preparation to create the costumes, food and the ceremony.

April 2004 and 2008 saw [THE RMRS](#) parading through the streets of Rome. Again the Society were joined by Legio II Augusta and hundreds of other re-enactors from across

Europe to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the eternal city.

In May 2009, [THE RMRS](#) joined forces with the Ermine Street Guard, Legio VIII Augusta MGV, the Gemina Project & Corbvlo (from the Netherlands), Legio XI CPF (from Belgium), Legio XXII Primi and Bagaconerviio (both from France) at Corbridge Roman Town just South of Hadrian's Wall. The combination of groups created, for the first time in Hadrian's Wall country, a full Century of 80 Legionaries! Supplemented by a strong contingent of Auxiliaries, it was both a sight and an experience to behold. Most importantly, it was a significant milestone for co-operation between different groups from across Europe. So much so, that we did all again for English Heritage's "Festival of History" at Kelmarsh Hall, Northamptonshire in July 2010!



In June 2010, [THE RMRS](#) joined Dutch, Belgian and German colleagues in Nijmegen, Holland to celebrate the town's Batavian and Roman heritage. Over a full weekend's activities, [THE RMRS](#) was honoured with leading the combined force of legionaries and auxiliaries - a testament to our members' professionalism and the Society's reputation and standing.

The Future? With your active participation, [THE RMRS](#) will continue to go from strength to strength. Our Living History displays will be developed with the introduction of better "stage" props to recreate a typical Roman street scene. Military equipment will be improved to reflect more up-to-date research and offer more diversity in the types of Roman soldiers we can portray. Already trips to Nijmegen in Holland and Marle in France are being planned. And we will again parade in Rome...

