

## **The Myth of the Medieval Hilltop Towns and Villages of Italy**

**The whole of the Apennine Mountain Range in Italy, from the north of Tuscany to the south of Calabria is dotted with several hundred of these ancient walled towns and villages.**

**From the Autostrada they look to be an essential part of a holiday and some of them are simply breathtaking, dating back to the middle ages with views that will last in the memory for a lifetime.**

**However, these are exceptions. The majority are in a slow terminal decline.**

**Piegaro in southern Umbria sits about 400 mtrs above sea level and is a clear example of this decline.**



**The glass factory that once rivalled Murano in Venice and produced the windows for nearby Orvieto's famous cathedral windows has long gone. It is now a museum of only average quality.**

**Increasingly the houses are being abandoned or offered for sale but buyers are few and the state of the properties suggests that they require imagination as well as money.**



The shops are closing and the pizzeria that has been abandoned, appears like the Marie Celeste – looking as if it is ready to serve but no one is there and no one seems to know why it has closed.



**The streets have an eerie silence about them which is occasionally interrupted by a Piegari venturing out.**



**With youth unemployment in Italy at an eye watering 33% (OECD figures for April 2017) it is easy to see why the 18-25 age group see no future in staying.**

The feeling of abandon permeates through increased neglect.



The ubiquitous *Panda*



Uncollected mail



An abandoned "*cantina*" storage area

**Even grand buildings are left as the next generations are either no longer willing or able to pay for their upkeep and builders find it easier to construct new build houses without the incumbrance of Italian property laws.**



Increasingly those that are left are the old.



And as the community notice shows, they are also dying.....



