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Education and culture

## **Bocholt visit becomes a journey into family history for Italians**

### **Son of a former prisoner of war visits former city forest camp // Emotional tour of the memorial site**

The Italian Lauro Venturi now visited Bocholt. For him, it was also a journey into the past of his family history.

During a guided tour, Venturi learned more about the eventful history of the former Bocholt city forest camp. His father Lino (\*1914 '1986) had been imprisoned there as a prisoner of war during the Second World War.

Lauro Venturi stopped off in Bocholt during a 10,000 km motorbike tour across Europe. Beforehand, he contacted the city administration, which invited the guest from Bologna and his companion Giuseppe Ferrari to a guided tour of the former camp grounds and today's recreation area. Even the Italian daily newspaper Gazzetta di Modena reported on it in advance.

"This is a very rare opportunity to come into direct contact with relatives of prisoners of war once imprisoned in Bocholt. The exchange with Lauro Venturi was already very interesting and touching at the same time before his visit," reports Bocholt's cultural manager Oliver Brenn.

### **Guided tour of the city forest by museum director Lisa Resing**

The director of the Bocholt city museum, Lisa Resing, described to Venturi the eventful history of the camp and went into particular detail about the situation of the prisoners of war. The tour ended at the memorial site. Here, the Italian guest took the opportunity to place a brochure he had compiled in advance about his father's time in Bocholt at the memorial stone and to commemorate his father.

"When my father spoke about the time of the Second World War and his imprisonment in my youth, I had little interest in these topics. This has changed in recent years, and during my motorbike tour I was keen to go to the place where my father was imprisoned for one and a half years under the most difficult conditions - and experienced great suffering," Venturi said.

Before he left for his next stop in the Netherlands, he thanked the Bocholt municipality for looking after him before and during his visit. He also thanked Francesco Varone, who as a member of the Italian Cultural Association had agreed at short notice to accompany the tour as a translator.

### **Contact to be maintained**

Venturi, cultural manager Brenn and museum director Resing want to stay in contact and exchange information about the fate of his father and the situation of prisoners of war imprisoned in Bocholt. Among other things, Venturi wants to make available written documents from his father about his time in STALAG VI F in Bocholt. "With a view to researching the history of the city, such sources are incredibly valuable," says Resing.







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*From right to left: Museum director Lisa Resing, Lauro Venturi, Giuseppe Ferrari and interpreter Francesco Varone during a visit to the memorial site in the former Bocholt city forest camp. Venturi's father had been imprisoned there during the Second World War.*



*Lauro Venturi at the memorial in the city forest*