Woman finds the relatives of the prisoner who 70 years ago wooed her Grandma

*Polly, an English stage director, is writing a play out of the story*

Her wish was realized. On the second trip made in Modena within a year, Polly Wright, English theater director, in the coming days will meet the relatives of Gualtiero Lenzi, born 1913 in Castelluccio di Moscheda, prisoner in the United Kingdom during the Second World War and worker in Polly's family farm in Wales for some years. There was a love story, blossomed in the kitchen of that house overseas that, just now, a few letters of the time revealed.

The story regards Gualtiero Lenzi and Polly's grandmother, Kathleen Hooson. Polly found at home many letters kept before by her grandmother and later by her mother Hellen. Four letters, tied with a pink bow, were sent to Kathleen by Gualtiero: three \*when he was still in the UK, after being moved to a second prison camp in England, dating from January 1945 to November 1946, and the fourth written in Castelluccio di Montese in 1949, shortly after getting married and becoming the father of a little girl. He told Kathleen kind words and in a letter he wrote: "Some times I have been unkind to you, but maybe because I liked you too much. But if I upset you in some way I'll show you that I will remember for ever of our friendship as something sacred". *(I translated italian to english, so this is not the exact quote*)

He also sent her from Italy a photograph with a dedication: "To my dear friend Lady Hooson and family". "I think that he and Grandma liked each other, but I do not know the rest, it will remain a mystery," comments Polly, whom we met at the Istituto storico di Modena where she went to track Gualtiero's relatives. Polly has come to Italy with his friend Rowena Clayton, and together they are visiting the cemetery of Savignano, where Gualtiero had moved with his family and where he died on June 21, 1995. Now she is preparing a play on the life of Italian prisoners of wars in her town's camp. "Gualtiero – Polly says – will be the main character."

Gualtiero Lenzi, farmer, enlisted in 1939 and sent to fight in North Africa, was captured in Libya by the British army and sent to the Pool Park camp, in the town of Ruthin, Wales. After a short time he became free worker in the Hooson's farm: "In our farm there were cows, pigs, chickens, sheep. It was located in a mountainous area, very similar to the one the Lenzi family lived in, in Castelluccio di Montese. However, he preferred to work in the kitchen and it was there that he met my grandmother. Grandma wanted to learn Italian, while Gualtiero wanted to learn English. He learnt our language well, because in the camps the prisoners could attend English language courses. " He returned home in February 1946, together with his brother Nello, also captured in Libya and former prisoner in the United Kingdom. Another brother, Gilberto, had been caught by the Germans and brought to Germany. He got back home on October 15, 1945.

Walter Bellisi

* The writer of the article made an error here. One letter was written from another UK camp, while three were written from Castelluccio from 1946-49