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Days of courage and fear relived



Tales of friendship and courage across the miles and through the years were retold at a thought provoking and emotional event in Market Rasen Methodist Church.

More than 100 people travelled from far and wide for the presentation 'POW (prisoner of war) Albert Rhoades and the Courage of Italian Families' organised by Albert's grandson, Stephen Hewson.

The story of Albert's wartime capture in North Africa and subsequent transportation as a POW to Italy was incorporated into the wider history of the period.

Those present heard how Albert, former mayor of Market Rasen, endured capture in the heat of the Libyan desert followed by an uncomfortable transit to Italy.







Fortunate to survive Italian prison camps, where some of his friends perished, Albert was eventually moved to Verona and then made his escape.

He was sheltered by an Italian family for some months during which time he worked alongside them harvesting crops. Several Italian guests flew over for the event. Among them was Gianonio Bonato, one of the descendents of the Italian family, who spoke of the meeting between his father and Albert.

Italian film director, Mauro Vittorio Quattrina, introduced excerpts from his documentary 'Those Days of Courage and Fear' which describes the history of WWII prison camps in Italy as told through the memories of eye-witnesses; many of the documents had not even been seen in Italy.

And following the talk, several letters from Allied families to their loved ones were opened for the very first time and read out to a captivated and emotional audience.

Finally, in a display of friendship, plaques were exchanged between Market Rasen and the Italian town of Zevio, where Albert was imprisoned.

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