

VareseNews

Rodari's fisherman dies

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Even on his last day, he went out onto the lake on his boat. Born in 1921, **Bruno Brovelli**, “**il Brunin**”, was one of the last professional fishermen of Ranco, and he had dedicated his whole life to fishing around Verbania. From his house in Piazza Venezia, he “observed” everything that happened in the village. VareseNews interviewed him a few years ago. He told us about his friendship with the writer **Gianni Rodari**, the “schoolmaster” who taught in Ranco in the 1940s. They were the same age, and had seen each other every day, after lunch (“when I had already been fishing for a few hours,” he said); they had met because Brunin’s mother was the caretaker of the school, and there followed a long, sincere friendship. Il Brunin told us that **Rodari had also spent hours speaking to his father**, with whom he shared socialist and ant-Fascist sympathies. Bruno had gone out onto Lake Maggiore several times with the writer, and a few years later, in his “**Fairytales over the Phone**”, Rodari introduced the “**fisherman of Ranco**”, based, most probably, on his friend Brunin.

For Bruno Brovelli, the lake was not only a “workplace”, it was his whole life. “He helped us to start up Ranco’s fish-breeding project,” said Councillor, Federico Brovelli. “He supervised it from the beginning, his experience was unique, and he had a great passion for fishing. I remember him always on his boat, out on the lake.”

He has died at the age of ninety, and with him, a piece of his village’s history has gone. “He was the memory of Ranco, he remembered everything,” said Vittorio Vezzetti, the former deputy mayor, an expert on local history and the editor of the book “Rodari and the lake”. “We speak about him often, remembering his friendship with the writer; we interviewed him in the video ‘The teacher and the fisherman’. But his ironclad memory was much greater; he once told me something curious. He claimed that, in the 1960s, he had seen a tsunami in Ranco. I was amazed, and I went to look for scientific confirmation. And it was true; some boulders had come loose at Santa Caterina, in Leggiuno, and caused an abnormal, 3 metre-high wave that struck our village. It was an extremely rare event, but he hadn’t missed it.”

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