

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS

Vigsnes Mining Museum	Ruin from the works	Hiking Trail
Old Mine	World War II Memorial	Vehicle road
Smelting Works	Walking Path	View Point



**VISNES COPPER MINE** was, in its day, the largest and most modern mine in Northern Europe. The mine was in operation during two periods between 1865 and 1972, where 4.2 million tons of copper, zinc, and sulphur were produced.

**IN 1882** it was said that Visnes was "Norway's largest workplace", employing up to 1000 workers in its heyday. In just a few years, the village was transformed into a hectic mining town with a population of around 3000 people, a school, a hospital, a dairy, and shops.

**THE MINING WORKS** were driven by, among others, Charles DeFrance, a French engineer. He was keenly interested in nature and the great outdoors and created a large park and riding trails. The riding trails which were for use by the mine's functionary workers, are today a popular walking area.

**COPPER FROM VISNES** was used in the construction of the renowned Statue of Liberty in New York.

**VISNES IS ALSO** one of the many places along the coast where German forces maintained watch posts and defences during World War II and from which traces are still visible today.

**Guided tours** are provided in the area, as are other cultural-historic arrangements. The 1800s rallar diet and Sunday dinner buffet are some of what is on offer. Vigsnes Mining Museum is open during the summer season, or by appointment. At Litlaortå, one can play at being a miner and perhaps find a lump of copper silica out in the copper rinsing plant!

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LAURITZ HAALAND'S PAINTING DEPICTING THE MINING COMMUNITY AT VISNES IN 1893.  
PHOTO: HAUGESUND BILLEDGALLERI

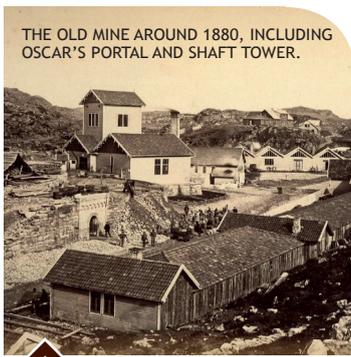
**VISNES COPPER WORKS** was the first mechanised mining enterprise in Norway where steam-driven machinery replaced manual labour and water wheels. The Copper Works invested in modern technology and was an early proponent of technical innovation:

**1875 /** Drilling machines powered by compressed air are taken in use, a first for Norway.

**1880 /** The telephone is installed in Visnes, only four years after its invention.

**1885 /** Electric light is introduced to Visnes, all of seven years before electric lighting is used in Kristiania, the capital of Norway.

**2 / Workers' Quarters.** As the number of employees increased, the mining company established a fund to cover the building of 14 dwellings. When the mining operations were discontinued, many of the families living in company dwellings took the houses with them when they moved. One of the two workers' houses still standing at Visnes today is «Sven House», which is now part the mining museum's collection. Sven Knutsen, who owned the house, worked in the mine for many years. The house is today preserved in the same condition as when Sven Knutsen left it.



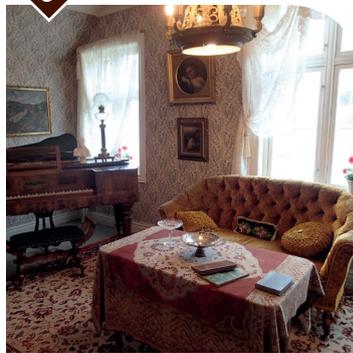
THE OLD MINE AROUND 1880, INCLUDING OSCAR'S PORTAL AND SHAFT TOWER.

**1 / Oscar's Portal.** Oscar's Portal was the first entrance to the old mine. The entrance ways descended to 730 metres below ground. The portal was erected in 1872, when King Oscar visited Visnes in conjunction with the opening of the national unity monument at Haraldshaugen in Haugesund.



**3 / The Administration Building.**

This building, dating from 1868, housed the operations offices, and is one of the few buildings from the mine's heyday that still exists. The building is a part of the museum collection that includes a photo exhibition and the "Defrance Room", which depicts the domestic lifestyle of the mine's director during the period.

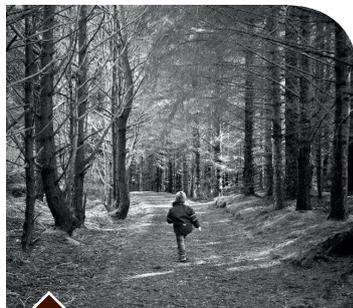


THE DIRECTOR'S LIVING QUARTERS WERE SITUATED BY WHAT IS TODAY THE ENTRANCE TO THE FRANSEHAGEN GARDEN. THE RAIL TRACKS RAN TO THE SMELTER WORKS



**4 / Fransehagen Garden.**

Charles Defrance was preoccupied with flowers and gardens, and it was he who laid out the large park in an area that previously resembled a desert, and which became known as Fransehagen Garden. Here, exotic flowers and trees were planted, and a duck pond, a bowling lane, and kitchen garden were created. The pavilion was used by the administration staff to hold functions. From the pavilion they could enjoy the fantastic view and a glass of Champaign. From this viewpoint it is possible to see all of the largest islands around Haugalandet: Feøy, Røvær and Utsira.



**5 / Riding Tracks.**

Riding tracks were laid out for the administration staff to use in their spare time. Today, the riding tracks are part of a charming walking area. Follow the old tracks as they wind north from Fransehagen Garden.

**6 / Smelting Works.** The smelting works is situated in rough surroundings very close to the sea, where only the walls remain. The smelting works commenced operation in 1872. It was here that ore, which could not be treated with water, but which was rich in copper and zinc, was melted. The smoke emitted from the smelting works contributed to loss of crop on nearby farms, causing local farmers to redress the situation in court. Operations at the smelting works ceased after only fifteen years in existence.



**7 / The Statue of Liberty.**

It was confirmed in 1985 that the copper used in making the Statue of Liberty in New York originated from the mine at Visnes. The original is a gift of friendship from France to the people of the United States. The statue was presented to the U.S. and stands as a symbol of freedom and democracy. The copy was purchased from Texas following an initiative taken by the Friends of the Visnes Copper Mine, and was unveiled in 2004.

**8 / Vigsnes Mining Museum.**

The museum's exhibitions depict the transition from a society engaged in traditional farming and fishing to an industrial society. The museum's permanent exhibitions depict the fantastic story of the mine: from work process in the pit to everyday life in western Norwegian society.

