

History of the mine



The first historical data regarding the Resiutta schists date back to 1860 when the scholar Giulio Andrea Pirona mentioned Mr. Barnaba Perissutti of Resiutta as the discoverer of the deposit.

The latter, in partnership with Mr. Di Gaspero of Pontebba, **began the deposit's exploitation in 1868.**

The extracted shale was sold as fuel for the production of gas for lighting, but due to the high quantity of ash and the great production of sulphurous vapours, the fuel was rarely used.

It was then decided to overcome these inconveniences by building a furnace for the distillation of the fuel, in order to produce hydrocarbons.

It was with the construction of this plant in 1908 that the **"ichthyolitic schists"** – the oil shales – began to assume significant economic importance.

The events surrounding the First World War saw both exploration and exploitation suspended from October 1917.

The post-war period was certainly the most active period of the mine as a result of investments and new shale extraction and distillation techniques.

Unfortunately, the mineral processing plants had suf-

fered severe damage, and repairs to the plant only began at the start of July 1920 and work in the mine in November of that year, even if it was more about restoration than extraction and distillation of the shale. Only in 1926 did exploitation and processing resume, lasting until 1927.

A period of inactivity followed caused by numerous transfers of the mining concession to various companies and by the latter's financial difficulties. **The mine was re-opened in June 1932 and, for about 5 years, was fully active** with a good production of shale-derived petrol. In 1938 all work was suspended due to the difficulties encountered in selling the shale-derived petrol and derivatives produced, materials which previously had been totally absorbed by the Ministry of Finance, which used it as an alcohol denaturant. In 1940 work resumed, but **was finally definitively suspended on 14th November 1955.**

This concluded the mining activity that had lasted less than a century, but which was, for the entire area involved, a notable resource in terms of employment and social conditions it provided.



A group of miners in an early 20th century photo.

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The current situation regarding the mine

Between **2001** and **2002**, **numerous inspections** were conducted to assess the current status of the Resartico Mine. The field trips, conducted by technicians from the **Friulian Museum of Natural History** in collaboration with the **Friulian Speleological** and **Hydrological Club**, using the historical maps collected, were specifically aimed at identifying the **locations of the many existing tunnels** as well as other nearby mining systems (such as that at the Rio Serai) and other organic laminite outcrops.

The **dangerous nature of the tunnels** was immediately evident as most of the entrances and internal sections had collapsed.

The spaces still accessible are generally devoid of any support or safety features, except for a few sections that still retain the wooden structure (which is generally rotten).


Currently, **only the first 200 metres** of the tunnel in the upper section of the mine are **accessible in relatively safety** for an experienced speleologist.

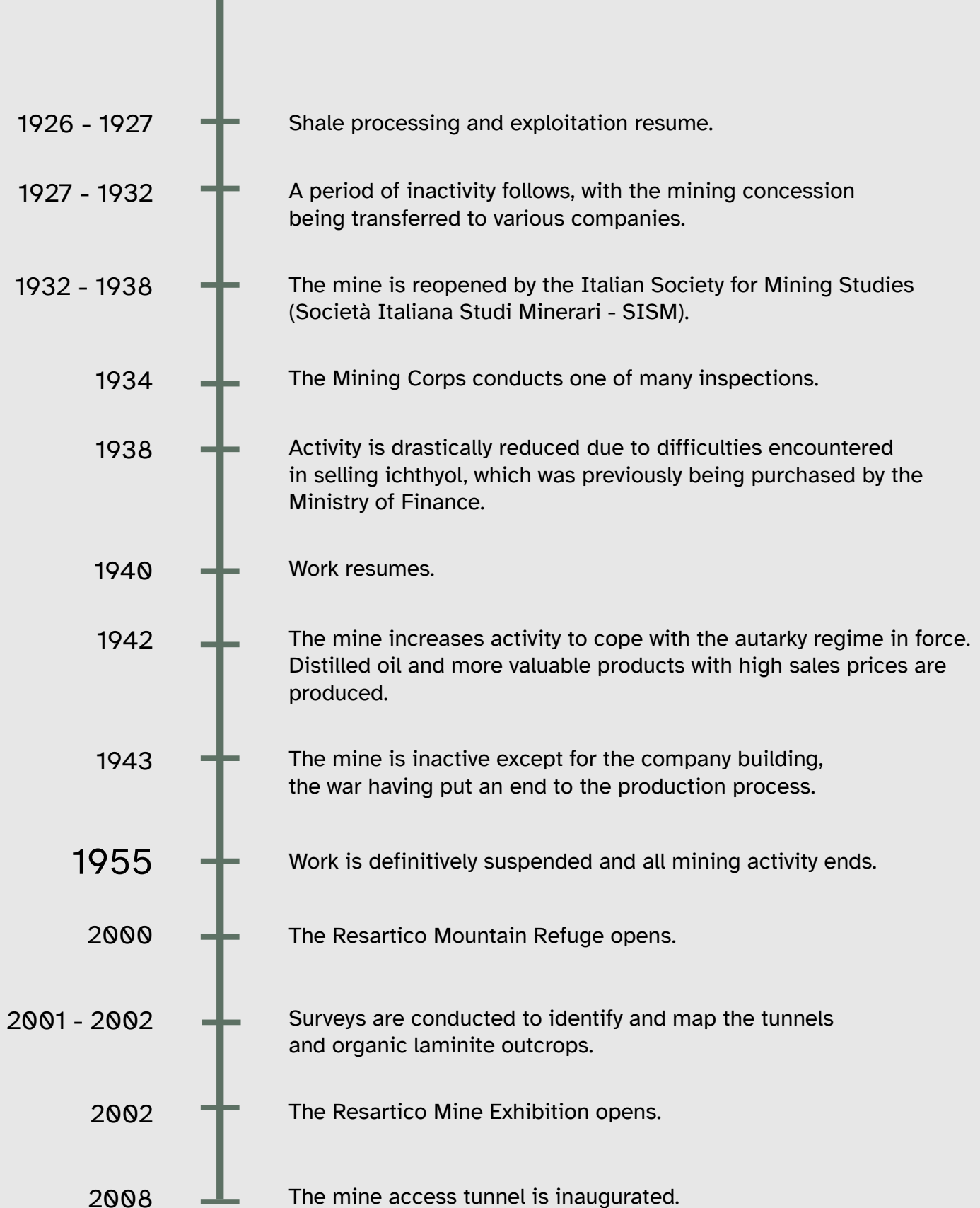
Following the safety measures carried out by the Julian Prealps Natural Park, the **connecting tunnel** from the mining village to the Rio Resartico riverbed is open to the public and can be visited during the summer months.



Interiors of the tunnels photographed in 2002.

1868 / 1955

1860		Giulio Andrea Pirona reports on the discovery of oil shale near Resiutta by Barnaba Perissutti.
1868		Perissutti and Di Gaspero of Pontebba begin exploitation of the deposit. In the following years, the concession is passed to Italian and foreign companies that invest in investigations and infrastructure projects.
1906		The <i>Società Veneta delle Miniere</i> receives the letter with the concession of investiture signed in the name of His Majesty Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy.
1908		A furnace for fuel distillation is built.
1911		The <i>Società Veneta delle Miniere</i> applies for an exploration permit from the Mining Corps' control body for a suspected oil deposit.
1912		The mine is sold to Osvaldo Mazzolini, Italo Valenti, and Francesco Dormisch for 42,000 lire (200,000 Euros at today's prices).
1915		The Resiutta Bituminous Oil Production Company informs the Mining Corps that the mine is active.
1917		Operations are interrupted due to the war. The cableway is damaged and some machinery is destroyed.
1920		Repairs to the plant begin.
1925		The mine is transferred to the Franco-Italian Mining Company of Marseille.



1926 - 1927	Shale processing and exploitation resume.
1927 - 1932	A period of inactivity follows, with the mining concession being transferred to various companies.
1932 - 1938	The mine is reopened by the Italian Society for Mining Studies (Società Italiana Studi Minerari - SISM).
1934	The Mining Corps conducts one of many inspections.
1938	Activity is drastically reduced due to difficulties encountered in selling ichthyol, which was previously being purchased by the Ministry of Finance.
1940	Work resumes.
1942	The mine increases activity to cope with the autarky regime in force. Distilled oil and more valuable products with high sales prices are produced.
1943	The mine is inactive except for the company building, the war having put an end to the production process.
1955	Work is definitively suspended and all mining activity ends.
2000	The Resartico Mountain Refuge opens.
2001 - 2002	Surveys are conducted to identify and map the tunnels and organic laminite outcrops.
2002	The Resartico Mine Exhibition opens.
2008	The mine access tunnel is inaugurated.