



South Tyrol – Land of Myths and Legends

The Mountain Mine Near Klausen

A very long time ago, a number of Walchen (Italians) would come from the south into the region around Klausen every year, just after the first snows had melted. After their arrival, they would establish themselves near Tinnebach Stream. Everyone shunned the Walchen people because they did not understand their language and did not trust their secretive behaviour.

One day, two citizens of Klausen went to Bolzano (Bozen) early in the morning. There, they watched as a large, densely packed group of Walchen people coming down from Villanderer Berg Mountain, heading south. A little old man came hurrying along in their wake, panting for his heavy burden. The two men from Klausen took pity on the feeble old man and offered to relieve him of his heavy load. The little man gratefully accepted. The weight soon became too much even for the strong men of Klausen so they sat down to rest after an hour's walk. The Walche man thanked them profusely. He gave each of the men a shiny silver ore stone, telling them that they would find large quantities of these stones at Tinnebachtal Valley. They had only to look where the shadow of Säben Steeple falls at sunrise during the summer solstice. Then the little man disappeared and the Walchen people were never seen again in the Klausen area.

Back in Bolzano, the men discovered that the Walchen's gift was indeed very valuable silver ore. So they searched for the shadow of Säben Steeple during the next summer solstice. They found it on a steep rock face known as Gerstein, in Tinnebachtal Valley. Inside a fissure in the rock face, they found a narrow tunnel that the Walchen people had created: it led them deep into the mountain and contained rich deposits of silver ore. So it was that the mountain mine at Pfunds, near Klausen, was discovered.