

# On historical ground

Garpenberg is Sweden's oldest mining area still in operation. Ore has been mined here since the Middle Ages.

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**PROCESSING OF ORES IN THE GARPENBERG AREA** began in the 13th century, and in the 14th century German mining experts were engaged to teach effective mining methods. Local residents called the Germans "garpar", which gave the village of Garpenberg its name.

Anyone who knew how to exploit new ore deposits could acquire great wealth, and so royal houses and church magnates took an early interest in mining. But the deeper the mine, the more complicated the work, and pit collapses were a regular occurrence. When Gustav Vasa acceded to the throne 1523, he decided that the Swedish mining industry should be developed. Facilities were improved and production increased. From 1553, the mine at Garpenberg was operated as a state enterprise, but it was closed 25 years later after less than successful attempts at smelting silver.

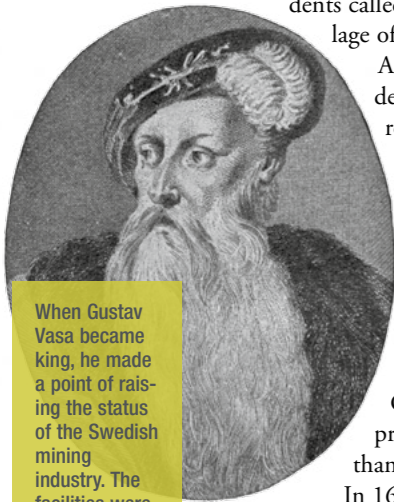
In 1601, King Charles IX ordered mining to be resumed. The growing problem of flooding, however, involved huge costs and by the end of the 1630s, the mining operation had been transferred to merchant Thomas Funck from Stockholm. The Funck family ran the factory and mines until 1768, when bankruptcy loomed. The mine would be operated by other families, such as Stockenström

and Cornelius, over the next 100 years, and thereafter in the form of a company. Profits from the mining movement could be taken by building fashionable manors, but there were also many bankruptcies throughout the period. In the late 19th century, ownership was restructured into three different groups, of which one, Rullshytte Grufbolag, later became Garpenberg AB.

**IN THE EARLY 1900s**, a railway was established for ore transport and attempts were also made to invest in a cableway, but recessions and bankruptcies hit the mining company hard. In 1942, the shaft was also affected by a major rockfall. As there was a huge risk that water from Lake Gruvsjön would fill the mine, the northern part of the lake was drained. The above-ground infrastructure was also affected, and the station building was moved 500 metres north. Mining activities were also subsequently moved to this area, and in 1957 the new facility was bought by Boliden.

In the 1990s, Garpenberg's continued survival was hanging by a thread. Metal prices were low and Garpenberg's profits were poor. The turning point came at the turn of the century, when no fewer than four new ore deposits were discovered. Of these, Lappberget was the biggest – and is in fact the second-biggest deposit in the history of Boliden, after Aitik. When metal prices also increased, closure was no longer an option. Expansion was the order of the day.

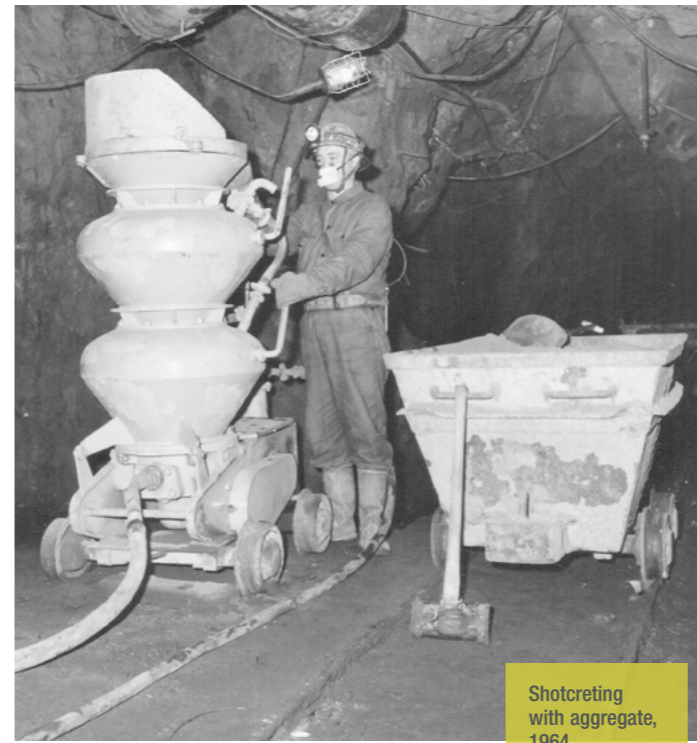
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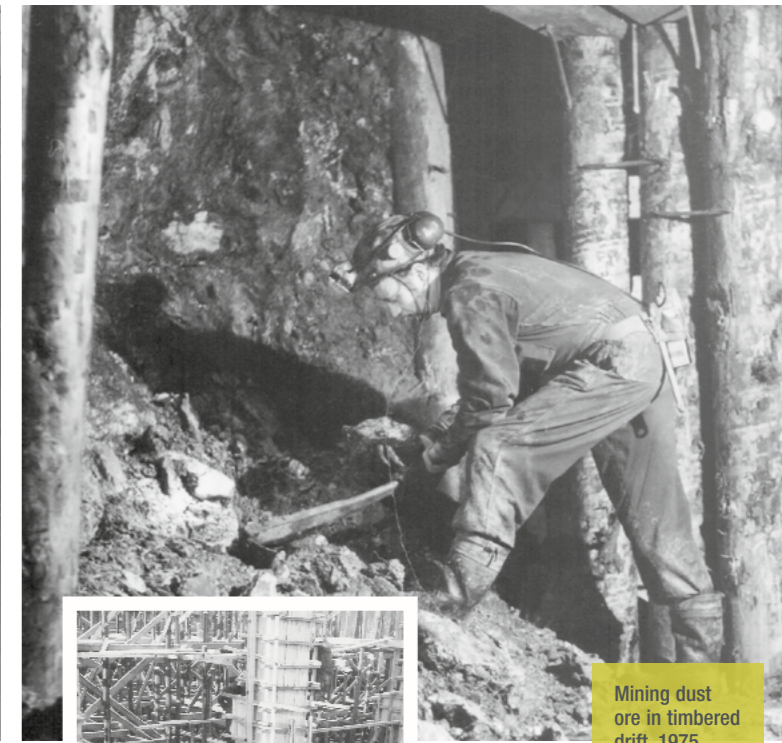
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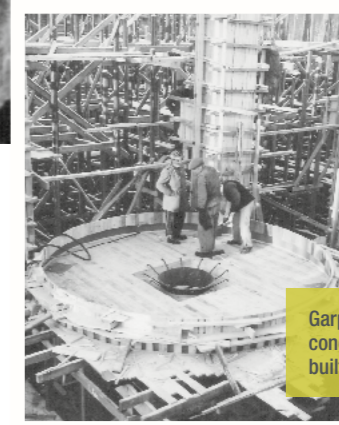
Working down a mine used to be a risky job involving heavy lifting, collapses and a risk of carbon dioxide poisoning. Nowadays stringent demands are defined for safety and the work environment.



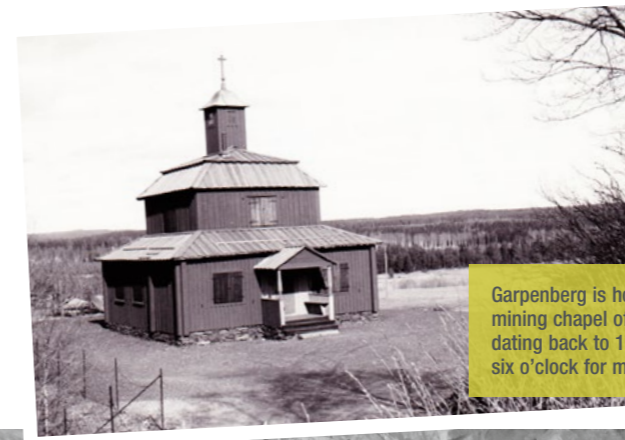
Shotcreting with aggregate, 1964.



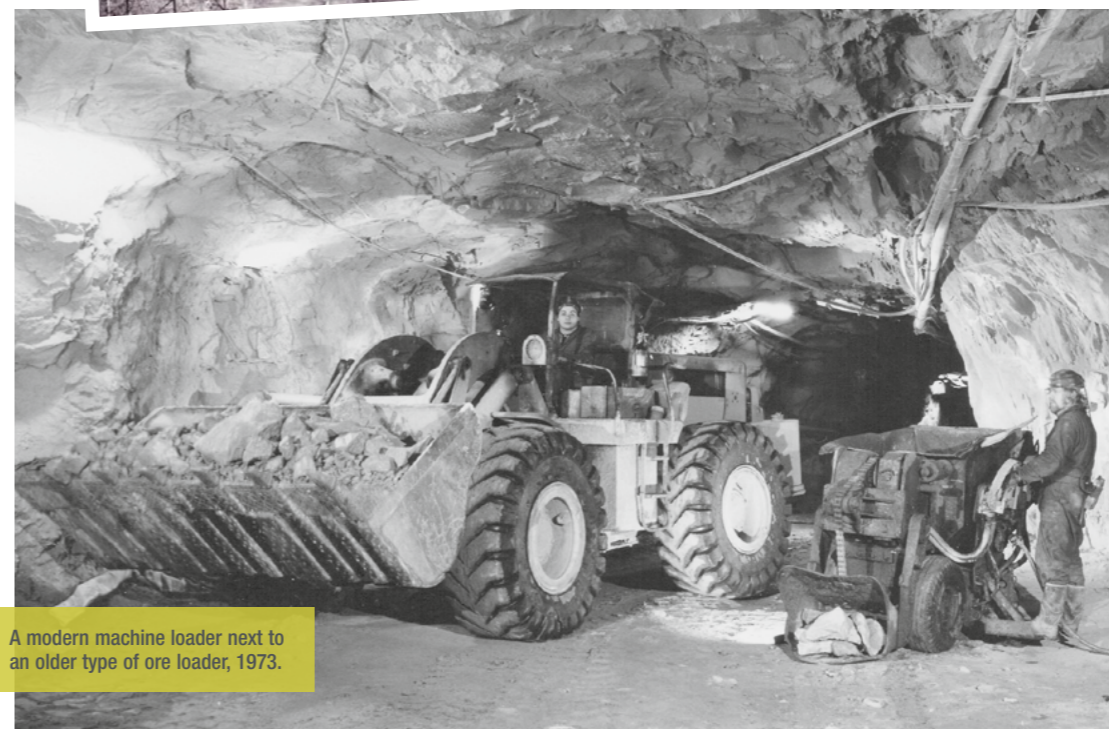
Mining dust ore in timbered drift, 1975.



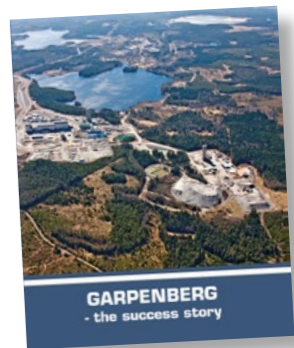
Garpenberg's new concentrator was built in 1955.



Garpenberg is home to Sweden's only preserved and intact mining chapel of its kind, dating from the 1600s. An ordinance dating back to 1756 states that all mine workers should meet at six o'clock for morning prayers before descending into the mine.



A modern machine loader next to an older type of ore loader, 1973.



**GARPENBERG**  
- the success story

## GARPENBERG - THE SUCCESS STORY

The ore deposit in Garpenberg around the turn of the millennium was found after seven years of prospecting under the management of Rolf Jonsson, at that time head geologist at Boliden. A large number of geologists, geophysicists and other professionals were involved – but what did their work involve? In the new book "Garpenberg – the success story", Rolf and his colleagues talk about the prospecting work which paved the way for the expansion of Garpenberg.