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FABBRICHE DI CAREGGINE, THE GHOST VILLAGE BURIED UNDER THE WATERS OF THE LAGO DI VAGLI

Where the Lago di Vagli now lies, there once stood a village named Fabbriche di Careggine that was purposefully flooded in the forties to create a hydroelectric dam. Until 1994, "once every ten years", the reservoir used to be emptied for maintenance and the stone village resurfaced, with its dusty little church, beautiful humpback bridge and graveyard. Will we ever see Fabbriche di Careggine again?

Located in the province of Lucca, about 40 km northwest of Borgo a Mozzano, **Fabbriche di Careggine**

“disappeared” beneath the waters of the *Lago di Vagli* between 1947 and 1953, when the hydroelectric dam was created. The village had been founded in the 13th century by a group of blacksmiths from **Brescia**, Lombardy, and became famous for the production of iron. In 1755, a mill was built in the village and the **Duke of Modena** granted the inhabitants certain privileges, such as tax exemptions and exemption from military service in order to promote local craftsmanship. Wonderful *Via Vandelli* – the historic road running across the *Torrente Edron* stream and connecting Modena with Massa – also dates back to that period and saw the passage of merchants, wayfarers and soldiers travelling through the **Tuscan Apennines** and the **Apuan Alps**. In the 19th century, there was a decline in the iron industry and the residents of Fabbriche di Careggine became farmers and shepherds; at the beginning of the 20th century, the Village economy recovered thanks to the exploitation of the marble quarries near Vagli and, for this reason, a small hydroelectric power plant was built on the Edron Stream. Later in 1941, the **SELT-Valdarno** electric power company (acquired by **E.N.E.L.** in 1963) decided to create a massive reservoir and dam and so it was that Fabbriche di Careggine was drowned in 1947 for hydroelectric production and its 146 inhabitants were moved to new homes in **Vagli Sotto**.

The Lago di Vagli was drained for maintenance work in 1958, 1974, 1983 and 1994; there are plenty of articles on the internet saying that the reservoir is emptied once every ten years, but that's actually not true.

The last pictures of Fabbriche di Careggine were taken in 1994 and show the dusty little **Church of St Theodore** with its bell tower in ruins, thirty-one unroofed buildings, a humpback bridge and a tiny graveyard. The village looks like a perfect place for ghosts, no wonder it has a load of ghostly tales swirling about! Given its ever-growing popularity, the area around the Vagli Lake has been undergoing major redevelopment in the last few years, resulting in the construction of a **public swimming pool** overlooking the Lake waters, a **lakeside walkway** and a **200 meter long Tibet-style pedestrian suspension bridge** which will be officially inaugurated on June 19, 2016. Rumours of an imminent emptying of the Vagli reservoir continue to swirl; however, just like the majority of rumors, they appear to be completely false. Besides being an important resource for the production of electricity, the reservoir is also key to water supply in the Serchio Valley and beyond and – emptying operations aside – going five to six months without the Lake would mean a huge loss of revenue for E.N.E.L.

In view of the above-mentioned reasons, we cannot say when Fabbriche di Careggine will be revealed once again, all we can do is sit and wait and hope for news soon. More than one million people are expected to attend the event, so keep your eyes open as we keep the news feed rolling!

Check out this old video made in Fabbriche di Careggine in 1947.

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