

Themed Walk

The establishment of the factory in 1891 triggered an influx of workers, and the population of Dives-sur-Mer suddenly increased, from 1,440 inhabitants to 5,570 by 1931. Factory employees and their families now made up over two thirds of the citizens of Dives, and many of them were originally from further afield: they included Bretons, Moroccans, Russians, Poles, Italians, Algerians, Portuguese and more... In order to house these new arrivals, the factory built its first *cités*, or housing estates, between 1891 and 1897, close to the port and to the belfry. These homes were rudimentary and subject to flooding during spring tides. From 1900, the factory purchased new plots of land on the other side of the railway, and more comfortable housing estates were built.

Separated from the old village by the canal (which has since become the boulevard Maurice-Thorez), the housing estates form a town of their own. The 1936 strikes, the resistance to Nazi occupation during the Second World War and various struggles for social justice galvanised the world of factory workers and gave the town a unique identity: by 1953, the council was run by a Communist majority.

While the earliest housing estates were knocked down, together with the factory, to make way for the *Port Guillaume* neighbourhood, those that were built between 1900 and 1930 on the other side of the railway have been preserved.

Legend

Aerial view of the factory and of the housing estates built between 1891 and 1897 close to the belfry, before they were knocked down in 1989. Inventaire général de Normandie, photograph: G. Lecrosnier, 1988.

Legend

The housing estates on the rue de l'Avenir and the rue de la Prospérité, which were built in 1897 (and have since been knocked down), seen from the banks of the Dives, Pierre Coftier collection.

Legend

The *cité Sainte-Cécile*, one of the first housing estates built in 1891 (and which has since been knocked down), close to the belfry, Jacques Gauthier collection.

This 5 km walk can be followed in two independent circuits, and may be started from the Office de tourisme.