



## MUSEU DA LOUSA – SLATE MUSEUM

This Museum opened in 2001, October 27.

The architect that designs this complex tried to join the tradition and the innovation as you can see in the recreation of Miner's House and in the Auditorium.

The small houses where the museum is installed, are built in the exterior with slate splints, an old construction technique, that uses the rest of slate industries to make the halls, because people was very poor and there was no other natural materials in the region. The walls are too thick (60 to 80 cm) because the splints were not united by any kind of cement, and so houses were low and with few openings.

The museum was created to remember one of the most important activities of Valongo's region, the slate mining and processing industries and also the different uses that slate can have.

### First House

We've recreated a Miner's House, with the different areas: kitchen to prepare meals; "sleeping room" to rest and working place for women and children increase the few resources of the man's work in the mine. There were no walls in the interior oh the house, and if they wanted to divide spaces, in order to create some intimacy, they had to put a rope between the walls and they hang textile sheets on them.

### Second House

Here are displayed tools used to extract slate from the mine, and we can see photos where miners are using them at their work. In this room are a few machines used to make school slates.

### Third House

In this place we can find elements that made part of the factory near the mine where tools were arranged when they were damaged, so they can spare time and money. We continue with the rest of the machines used to make school slates. We have also works on slate made by Valongo's students in some school and museum workshops.



## **EMPRESA DAS LOUSAS DE VALONGO**

The Vallongo Slate and Marbles Quarries was established in 1865 to supply UK and USA with roofing slate, tiles for paving and cladding, dam course and billiard tables.

Nowadays, the main productions are the slabs and tile riven, sawn or honed although the production of finished products keeps going on.

In the last years, the ELV accomplished big investments in the extraction and producing areas:

- in the extraction area, opened the biggest slate open cast quarry in Portugal, the quarry of Milhária, being the works almost completely mechanized;
- in the production area, the investment was mainly for improving the completely finished products; purchased a semiautomatic assembly line for the tile production, a machine specially to calibrate thicknesses and a department prepared to finish with the best quality with the best quality billiard slate.

The company owns more than 100ha in the Valongo slate area; the ELV has very large raw material reserves. The actual production capability is 200.000 (square miles) sqm/year, being 90% to export. The main markets are Germany, UK, Denmark, Spain, USA, Japan and Australia.

The slate is taken from the quarry in big blocks around 16 tons that, after being carefully inspected, are selected and conducted to the cleaving, sawing or honing sections. It is supplied in half finished or completely finished products: slabs, tiles, roofing slates, window sills, steps and risers, billiard tables. All these products are packed in cartons or in seaworthy wood crates.

The slate, due to its natural qualities of beauty, resistance and unchangeable colour, is being used since centuries in many different areas that go, from the civil construction to decoration.

The slate tiles, that may be applied alone or together with other material, provide a most attractive natural stone floor.

Being used in roofs and façades since old times, it is also an excellent insulation material. In fact, the Architecture History has a great many examples of slate covered building, the maintenance of which through the years shows its natural properties.